CONSIDERATIONS

UPON

THE STATE

OF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AT

THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

1796.

Si vobis in animo eſt tueri mœnia veſtra, nec pati hæc omnia GALLIAM *fieri—me ſequimini.*

Tit. Liv. B. 5. c. 47.

Fourth Edition.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. OWEN, NO. 168, PICCADILLY.

1796.

CONSIDERATIONS,

&c. &c.

THE ſyſtem of Europe which aroſe and unfolded itſelf in the fifteenth and ſixteenth centuries, remained in all its vigour during the next and the greateſt part of the preſent age, till by the exploſion of a new principle, and the effects of the revolution and conqueſts of France, it has been violently ſhaken and diſturbed, and is in danger of being overwhelmed or forgotten.

It would be a vain parade of knowledge to detail from hiſtory all the advantages we owe to this ſyſtem, and a ſuperfluous toil to expoſe the ignorance and ingratitude of thoſe who

would deride or abandon it.—Founded upon jealouſy and the fear of individual aggrandizement, it might ſometimes impede the progreſs of improvement as well as power; in circumſcribing the ſteps of ambition, it might check the march of ſcience, and retard the moral advancement of the world; or, while it provided for the general independence and ſecurity, by ſetting limits to empires, deprive particular provinces of local advantages, and intercept the common benefits of nature. Theſe are the crimes it is charged with—they have not been extenuated in my hands.

That, like all human inſtitutions, this ſyſtem had its defects and imperfections, is a melancholy truth which I will not attempt to deny or diſſemble, but when active malice and indolent declamation have exhauſted themſelves in its impeachment, it will be diſmiſſed with honour and acquitted with applauſe.

An artificial barrier, and an interdicted river, though happier themes for eloquence and poetry, are not more intrinſically unjuſt or injurious than commercial prohibitions, or colonial reſtrictions: and during the operation and energy of its principle, this criminal ſyſtem had aſ-

ſigned to all the ſtates of Europe their courſe and ſtation, their relations and allianees, a juſt reſtraint or a neceſſary protection, while the whole was bound together in one federal chain, ſuſtaining the weak and confining the powerful. Under its ſalutary influence, our ſmall but intereſting quarter of the globe has been gradually moulded and combined into one vaſt republic, the independence of its ſeveral members aſſerted and aſſured, the ambition of the preponderant nations diſappointed and repreſſed, and finally regarded as a treaſon againſt the liberty of all.

This jealouſy for more than a whole century has principally regarded the French nation, whoſe immenſe population and reſources, with the extent of their territory and advantageous poſition upon the continent and the ocean, but more than all, their reſtleſs character and military talents have conſtantly threatened, during that period, particular ſtates, or the common independence of Europe.

I have ſaid the French *nation*, not the king or the government, as is the cant of artful and of ſuperficial politicians; becauſe there is no error more vulgar and illiberal than to charge upon princes and miniſters as an individual fault, the common propenſity and paſſion of their country;

and becauſe in fact the government of France, with the abominable and abſurd ſyſtem of its financial adminiſtration, has frequently contributed in no ſmall degree to defend us from the force and fury of its numberleſs inhabitants, waſting their means and miſdirecting their efforts, which are both naturally to great and formidable for the common ſecurity and repoſe.

It is impoſſible to caſt our eyes over the map, or over the hiſtory of Europe, without inſtantly perceiving the danger reſulting from the enormous diſproportion and natural preponderance of France. The ſyſtem of which we are ſpeaking had itſelf improvidently favoured it in the beginning, for as the firſt peril aroſe from the power of Auſtria, then poſſeſſed of Spain, the Low Countries, and the New World, the aggrandizement of France had been deſired and promoted by the other ſtates, as the ſole barrier and defence they could reſort to, againſt the ambition of that family: and from the force of prejudice and habit, they continued the ſame policy, long after all this danger had ſubſided, after the ſeparation of the empire from the hereditary dominions, and after France had become more formidable herſelf than the ſtate againſt which her greatneſs was to be erected.

It is important to call theſe circumſtances to recollection, as the period of a general pacification approaches, and to conſider whether it can be expedient at that time to depart in any material degree from the wiſdom and policy of this ſyſtem, and to abandon the wholeſome experience of four centuries, either from the preſſure and impatience of momentary inconvenience, or for ſpeculations of future and contingent advantages.

In the courſe of the following pages, I intend to conſider both theſe propoſitions, which have acquired more credit and created more anxiety in the world than they are entitled to. And I ſhall endeavour to ſhew, firſt, that the ſtate of this kingdom is not ſuch as to compel us to any deviation from our old maxims, and policy, nor that of the enemy, if it were ſo, ſuch as to entitle or enable it to profit by our embarraſſments. Secondly, That the ſtate of the colonies or poſſeſſions of Europe in other quarters of the world, is not ſuch as to afford any reaſonable hope of our finding a counterbalance there to the predominance of France, if we were to aſſent to her pretenſions upon the territories ſhe has conquered from our allies.

In the courſe of theſe enquiries, it will become neceſſary for me to connect the war with

the

the principle of the French revolution; and that I may do ſo with more accuracy, I ſhall firſt treat of them ſeparately, and afterwards combine them together, as far as they appear to me to act upon one another, and to be reciprocally cauſes and effects of our preſent dangers, apprehenſions, or difficulties.

From the immenſe variety and importance of the objects that muſt paſs under my conſideration; I ſhall perhaps be forced to treat of them with a degree of preciſion and brevity that may appear confident; I am ſo far, however, from feeling myſelf liable to any reproaches upon this account, that I can honeſtly affirm, that it is from anxiety for truth and correctneſs in poſitions which are intimately blended with the welfare, and perhaps the exiſtence, of my country, that I forbear to recommend them to the imagination, and endeavour to ſpeak home to the underſtanding and the heart.

I have ſaid that the balance of power was expoſed to the diſcloſure of a new principle, as well as by the effects of the war. Conſidering this principal in general, and without analyſis or detail, it had for its object to diſſolve all the exiſting treaties and alliances of Europe, throughout the ſtates of which, it was to render general

one

one ſpecies of conſtitution, and to take the whole under the protection and guaranty of France. Thus inſtead of maintaining and invigorating the combination which had ſo long appeared neceſſary to repreſs the turbulence and ambition of that nation, we were to ſurrender every fortreſs and barrier into its hands, to receive its garriſons, and truſt implicitly to its generoſity and forbearance. It would be curious to conſider the artifice and foreſight with which the principal men in that country prepared from afar, and diſpoſed the public mind to receive ſo great a ſhock of opinion, and run counter to all the maxims, habits, and even prejudices of Europe. Unfortunately they received but too much countenance and aſſiſtance from thoſe who either did not perceive the danger, or were anxious to turn it to their own profit and advantage. When we look at the havoc and ruin of this part of the world, it were unwiſe to diſſemble the ſhare its rulers have had in it; amongſt the miners and pioneers of its deſtruction we may diſtinguiſh its princes; its mob-kings were preceded by imperial reformers, and it was torn to pieces by hands conſecrated in its defence. This ſyſtem which had long been mocked with bitterneſs and invective, was

now

now accuſed as the cauſe of all the wars that had ſo often deſolated Europe, and which were lately diſcovered to have been wanton, unjuſt, and unneceſſary; and the common religion, which even ſpeaking politically, had no doubt been a principal cauſe of the unrivalled proſperity of this part of the world, was expoſed to the attacks of infidel ſovereigns, more fatal than the ridicule of wits or philoſophers.

Joſeph the Second, and Frederic the *Great*, Staniſlaus of Poland, and Lewis the Sixteenth, were all of them reformers, and excepting the ſecond of them, they have all met with the fate of reformers;—it was only under their auſpices that the Voltaires and Rouſſeaus, the Mirabeaus and Condorcets worked at the common ruin and at their own, When poſterity ſhall contemplate the relations of the laſt ſix eventful years, its incredulity will diſappear and its doubts ſubſide, becauſe it will find them preceded by the expulſion of the monks in Flanders, by the deſtruction of the barrier in the Netherlands, by the writings of Frederic the Second, by the Comte Rendû and miniſterial democracy of Neckar—perhaps even its aſtoniſhment will be little or momentary, for it will have come freſh from beholding all Europe leagued together in

defence

defence of the rebellious colonies of America, and united to pull down and annihilate the only power which could protect its liberties, and which had protected them ſo often.

All theſe events and circumſtances are diſtinct and prediſpoſing cauſes, of the French revolution, as they are alſo of the forced and violent poſition in which we actually find ourſelves, from the moral corruption and phyſical inequality of the world.

The *exterior* principle of this revolution, if I may be excuſed that expreſſion, being the deſtruction of the balance of power by the diſſolution of the treaties, that of Munſter or Weſtphalia became their firſt obſtacle, and gave them the greateſt embarraſſment. Favourable at the time to the aggrandizement of France, it had nevertheleſs defined and fixed the limits of her empire; and beſides its expreſs ſtipulations had eſtabliſhed a principle in Europe, which with the progreſs of her ambition, and the impunity of her uſurpations, became a kind of enchanted circle, where her ſpirit felt uneaſy and confined. "What has France to do, ſays Mirabeau, with the pretended *balance of powers?* With ten years of a good adminiſtration, ſhe would regain her *natural ſuperiority over all Europe together.*"

Till the laſt war, it was a general maxim of that cabinet, that ſhe muſt cruſh England in the firſt conteſt in which that power ſhould be able to create no diverſion by her alliances on the continent.—The events and circumſtances of that war produced but a very imperfect change in this ſanguine perſuaſion, and certainly did not materially operate upon the political opinions of France, as every perſon converſant in the writings of that country muſt acknowledge. They conſidered us as ruined and humiliated, and about to be deprived of our poſſeſſions in the Eaſt Indies, as we had unfortunately been forced to abandon our colonies in the Weſt. "England, ſays the ſame writer, whoſe authority I prefer to many others upon the ſame ſubject, *England can do nothing*." She is no longer the firſt power, when ſhe has loſt the Indies (which ſhe can ſcarce retain for ten years) ſhe will be a power of the *third* rank. He then foretells that ſhe will experience commotions, and that ſhe will be ſprinkled with her own blood; but in recompence for her preponderance in Europe which ſhe is to forfeit, he generouſly makes her a preſent of liberty, which he declares to be incompatible with external power; and he concludes, that France

has

has nothing to apprehend from her, that ſhe cannot revenge the injuries of the laſt war, for fortunately, he exclaims, "*Elle n'en a pas les moyens*; that is out of her power *."

Not being however quite certain of deſtroying the treaties by the nullity of Great Britain, which would effectually accompliſh that purpoſe, and reſtore her *natural ſuperiority to* France *over all Europe together*; another project was ſet on foot, a kind of partition-treaty, by which the empire of the ſea and of commerce, might be ſecured to Great Britain, if, upon her part, ſhe would abandon the ſyſtem of Europe, and aſſign the whole dominion of the continent to France. And he propoſes in conſequence, "a ſolid, ſincere, and eternal alliance, *founded upon a treaty of commerce*, which ſhould put an end for ever to national jealouſies and bind indiſſolubly the intereſts of the two empires. "United," ſays he, "they would without difficulty, impoſe *ſilence upon the reſt of the earth*†."

Theſe plans or opinions are become important and remarkable, becauſe the events of the war, in which France has made ſuch enormous acquiſitions upon the continent, and the arms

* Dentes ſur l'ouverture de l'Eſcaut, p. 8 and 9. † Page 21.

of Great Britain been crowned with equal ſucceſs upon the ocean, have apparently given body and conſiſtency to this dangerous and wicked ſpeculation, and an idea has been thrown out into the world, that the territorial uſurpations of France might poſſibly be conceded at the peace, if an equivalent were found in the commercial and maritime aggrandizement of Great Britain. Though it is premature to examine this opinion, I cannot omit the firſt opportunity of branding it with every epithet, due to the moſt baſe and diſhonourable of all public counſels, excepting indeed, thoſe, which would ſubmit implicitly to the preponderance of France, without any recompence or ſtruggle, any hope of emancipation or reverſion of liberty.

Another project of France, for *regaining her natural ſuperiority over all Europe together*, was the forming the ten provinces of the Auſtrian Netherlands into an independent republic, and to open the navigation of the Scheldt by a war upon the United Provinces, in which preſuming the weakneſs and inſignificanc of England, and the inſurrections ſhe would be able to excite againſt the Stadtholder, ſhe had no apprehenſions of failing in ſucceſs. It is to be obſerved, the Emperor, the Dutch, and Great Britain, were

were at this time all at peace with France, yet ſhe was meditating and conſpiring revolutions, in every one of their reſpective ſtates.

The limits and barriers, the whole conventional law of Europe, ſtood in the way of France, even the geography and diſtinct appellations of its provinces and people, ſeemed an obſtacle to her *natural ſuperiority*. Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Flemings, reminded her of treaties which confined and coereed her, and ſhe recalled with affectation and ſolicitude the names of theſe regions and people, from times preceding the civilization and ſettlement of this quarter of the globe, from remote periods of antiquity, from the treatiſe of Tacitus, and the commentaries of Ceſar. Batavians, Belgians, Allobroges, Maſſilians, every term that could ſhake the habitual relations and exiſting ſyſtem, was diſcovered and reſtored: but the treaty of Munſter was expoſed alſo to a very peculiar ſpecies of attack, which was countenanced by the Emperor, who at that time had two projects to be favoured by it, namely, the opening of the Scheldt, and the invaſion of the liberties of Germany. Theſe were equally guaranteed by the treaty, as the treaty itſelf was by the principal Governments of Europe—but it was found that this treaty being againſt

the

the natural law, *in as much as rivers have a right to flow wherever they pleaſe*, no poſitive ſtipulations had any power to interrupt the liberty of their courſe*. The Emperor however having miſcalculated the ſtate of public opinion, and his own perſonal influence in the French cabinet, was obliged finally to deſiſt from this pretenſion by the treaty of 1788, and that of Munſter was reſpected till it became the direct intereſt of France to infringe it.

I have adverted to this circumſtance becauſe it afterwards became the immediate cauſe of the preſent war, and is the only one that it is now, at all neceſſary *diplomatically* to aſſign for it, tho', I proteſt I know not why, it has been more uſual to name others more diſputable and remote, ſuch as the decree of 19th Nov. 1792, and the interference of France, in our domeſtic œconomy and ſituation; theſe, in my opinion, would be more properly conſidered ſimply as additional and powerful motives for defending that treaty with greater obſtinacy, becauſe they prove that at the time the French openly attacked it, and with it the ſyſtem of Europe, they endeavoured to divert its guarantees from maintaining and pro-

* Annales politiques, civiles & littéraires, No. 88, 89.

tecting

tecting it, by exciting inteſtine diſturbances and commotions in their reſpective ſtates. It is in purſuance of the plan I have laid down, that I am thus careful to ſeparate the principle of the French revolution from the cauſe of the war, though I have no ſcruple to aſſert that nothing but the war could have turned the courſe and eluded the violence of the revolution:—that it brought the loaded cloud nearer to us I will not deny, but it has guided the bolt over our heads, and diſcharged it into the earth, harmleſs and ſpent for ever.

Having diſembarraſſed the cauſe of hoſtilities from all thoſe collateral circumſtances with which it is connected, and reduced it to the ſimple violation of the treaty of Weſtphalia, in the pretenſions and invaſion of the French upon Holland, in the beginning of the year 1793, I ſhall conſider the contagion and danger of their principles and their machinations in the boſom of foreign ſtates, under a totally diſtinct head, when I come to examine the remaining obſtacles to peace and negociation.

The French being thus clearly aggreſſors in the war, it remains defenſive on the part of Great Britain and her allies, unleſs, which I do not recollect, France has ever offered reſtitution

and

and indemnity for the injury. If ſhe ever has done ſo, I am willing to confeſs that it has changed its nature, and become unjuſt and ambitious upon our part; but till this fact is pointed out and aſcertained to me, I can diſcover only the injuſtice and ambition of thoſe, who belie, if they do not betray, the cauſe of their country.

Wars, ſay the civilians, are not maſſacres and confuſions, but the higheſt trials of right, when princes and ſtates put themſelves upon the juſtice of God for the deciding of their controverſies, by ſuch ſucceſs as it ſhall pleaſe him to award on either ſide. The war therefore may be conſidered as an appeal to Heaven, and though to prove it defenſive on our part, we need aſſign to men no other proofs than the violation of the treaty and actual invaſion on the part of France, yet in ſubmitting our cauſe to the great Judge and Diſpoſer of Events, we have the conſolation to know that it is defenſive, not of the Scheldt only, or of the fields of Flanders, but of our liberty, our conſtitution, and our religion, but of his laws and our own.

If we are to ſeek his judgment however in the actual circumſtances of the war, it is impoſſible to conceal that we have experienced many calamities and diſaſters, ſome inded that

are inſeparable from war, others ariſing from our own miſtakes and errors, and ſtill others more dreadful than all, from the viſitation of diſeaſe and the fury of the elements. It is no diſcovery of to-day, nor of the philoſophy of to-day, that *war* is an evil, nor that it is followed by a train of evils, nor that it has been frequently provoked by the violence of a king or the paſſions of a people; but it would be extraordinary indeed, if a ſpirit which neither piety nor reaſon, neither faith nor philoſophy, have been able to ſubdue, ſhould vaniſh at the bidding of his fellow-devil Sedition. I confeſs my aſtoniſhment is not excited only, but my indignation alſo, at all that cant and whining which have overwhelmed the preſs, and the debates of both houſes or Parliament, and at thoſe perfidious tears which fall *ſix times a week* over the unavoidable calamities that purſue its ſteps, becauſe I obſerve them to proceed from men, more anxious to call it nearer home, and to light it up in the boſom of their country, than to drive it to the confines of the earth, or extinguiſh it altogether.

Thoſe who would run the riſk of *civil* war, cannot take it ill if I ſuſpect them of exaggerating in ſome degree the antipathy they bear

to *foreign* war. Thoſe who extract the immorality from inſurrection and revolt, who reduce ſedition and rebellion, ſo long taught as a ſcience and a duty, to a frigid calculation of prudence, and apprehend nothing from violence and treaſon, but the improbability of their ſucceſs.—Thoſe who would turn our ſwords into *our own* boſoms, and ſhed our blood in *our own* fields, have no reaſon to be offended if it is not only to the delicacy of their nerves, and the exceſs of their ſenſibility, that I attribute a part of the repugnance they expreſs at the ſpectacle of our conteſts with *rival* and *hoſtile nations*.

War, however, is an evil, and no men can be more ſenſible that it is ſo, than they whoſe duty it is to declare its neceſſity, and announce the fatal ſentence to their country—They act under a dreadful reſponſibility to the laws, to public opinion, to poſterity, and to heaven. It is not the whining of the preſs, it is not the phraſe-factory of the oppoſition, that can deplore or expreſs the evils of war, as they are felt by thoſe, who every moment compare them with the evils which are avoided by war; who make the eſtimate and ſet-off in their boſoms, and weigh the blood which flows, with the

cauſe

cauſe that demands it—But when all its miſeries are numbered and detailed, there is a balance to be ſtruck at home, and a compariſon to be adjuſted abroad. On the one ſide, we ſee our fields remain with their ancient proprietors, the laws maintained, and juſtice adminiſtered, our temples unpolluted, and our conſtitution perfect on its baſe. On the other, when we contemplate the ſtate of our enemies, we do not find them exempted from impartial calamity, the war has dealt out deſtruction with an equal hand, and meaſured the diſaſters of mankind.

Sunt illis ſua funera, parque per omnes
Tempeſtas.

I ſee the ocean covered with their defeats, and the foreſts of Germany reeking with their blood; and turning from that diſguſting ſpectacle to their interior ſituation, what do I behold in the wild deſart of their empire, but a pale and emaciated people, expiring with famine, or fainting with fatigue and oppreſſion? I ſee their ſufferings and their groans ſtrike upon my ears, but I cannot diſcover the religion, or the juſtice, or the fundamental laws for which they are fighting; I do not find the huſband-

man in the fields, nor the merchant in his counting-houſe, nor the cities upon their foundations, nor in the cauſe for which they are contending any thing that is reſpectable but the enchanting name of their country!

Yet for this I find them brave every thing, and bear every thing, and am compelled to admire their miſtaken patriotiſm, as well as their military proweſs, and their political reſolution.

Imagination cannot paint a ſpecies or exceſs of miſery, which they have not felt and complained of; they have endured and perpetrated every horror, and ſuffered the action and reaction of every crime; full of indignation and remorſe, aſhamed of the paſt, and hopeleſs of the future, they derive a conſtancy from deſpair, and perſevere in the inextinguiſhable deſire of *aggrandizing* their country—their country, which panting at the heart, and bleeding at every pore, aſſumes the attitude and language of a conqueror, and dictates the terms of an inſulting peace, with a firm voice and an impoſing countenance.

It would be ungenerous to withhold applauſe from a ſpactacle like this; there has been a time when it would have been the admiration of Britiſh patriots, when it would have been

been the language of thoſe who aſpired to popularity, to bid us alſo, to dare and ſuffer all for our country; and when this part of the conduct of France would have been ſelected for the example of Engliſhmen, rather than that ſpirit of inſubordination and anarchy, which are the true cauſes of all the miſery and diſtreſs of our unhappy enemies. Is it not ſurprizing that thoſe who take ſo deep an intereſt in all the reſt of their ſituation, ſhould ſee nothing great or generous in devoting themſelves for their country? and for what a country? while, on the contrary, they have preached to their own a baſe and cowardly deſpondency, an abject and almoſt unqualified ſubmiſſion, under the "firſt ſcratches of the war?" but what do they diſcover in the character of Engliſhmen ſo new and degenerate, as to make them expect, that we will quit the gay and gallant veſſel which we navigate, or ſtrike our flag to a wreck—to a wreck which our arms have made, and the ſtorm toſſes without a rudder or a pilot, in which all that is intereſting is the deſpair and affection of the wretches that cling to her?

It is unneceſſary for me to make the compariſon in detail between the actual poſition of the contending countries. The internal ſtate of

France

France has lately been demonſtrated to the world with much accuracy and preciſion, in an excellent treatiſe upon their revolution and finances, which has been read and admired by every perſon of judgment and good information. I have conſequently not many remarks to ſet down upon that important ſubject; and no very material details, excepting upon circumſtances which have ariſen ſubſequent to that publication; and upon the other ſide, I ſhall confine myſelf in the ſame manner to the notice of a few of the leading and prominent features in our own ſituation and circumſtances.

With reſpect to the depreciation of the aſſignats, which at the time I write is liv. 5000=24 gold, or preciſely 201=1, I confeſs my ſcepticiſm as to all reaſoning and calculation that can be formed upon it. Notwithſtanding the decay and languor it experiences, there is a principle about it, which would make me unhappy, if I foreſaw no proſpect of pacification till it expired; I ſhould be ſorry indeed that we had nothing but a reverſion in the peace, and that the war was at any rate to terminate only with the funeral of this paper.

In my opinion, the actual reſources of a country are nothing elſe than its phyſical reſources,

ſources, namely, its population, ſubſiſtences, and capital, together with the faculty of re-production it poſſeſſes in the induſtry of its fields and towns; I conſider the credit of a ſtate as very diſtinct from its property; that it ariſes from the opinion or experience of its good faith and ſolvency, that it is limited and proportioned to its real poſſeſſions, and is ſo far from adding any thing *poſitive* to its reſources, that it diminiſhes them at any given period of time, by having acted before as an artificial capital, and conſequently enabled it to diſpenſe with a part of the real, which muſt otherwiſe have remained at home, if it were merely as the machine and vehicle of its commerce.

I have ſaid *at any given time*, becauſe no man can be more ſenſible than myſelf, of the *growing* and *progreſſive* advantages derived from it, and from the very circumſtances I have mentioned. But theſe conſiderations are foreign to the immediate ſubject of diſcuſſion. It ſeems certain that in the moſt proſperous times, the credit of a country can never be puſhed beyond its ſuppoſed faculties of repayment, and in periods of exigency, that, if it could be ſo, it would be ſo far from being entitled to be conſidered as an advantage or a reſource, that it

would

would add the greateſt weight to its decline and ruin.

A great part of the phyſical reſources of a country are at the diſpoſal of regular governments, and are conſtantly contributed, though the operation is indirect, complex, and frequently imperceptible. The credit of the ſtate is the moſt circuitous way of arriving at them, and conſequently the moſt extravagant; for it is nothing elſe but a previous mortgage of the national property for the intereſt and reduction of debts which are afterwards to be provided for by a more direct contribution; and the public thus pays not only what is right and neceſſary to the exigencies of the Government, but an additional premium to the lender. It does not only pay the whole amount of the taxes, with the expences of levying them, but an indemnity or recompence to the individuals who have advanced them in the firſt inſtance to the ſtate.

As a *reſource* therefore, we find, in fact, that in well regulated ſtates, their credit is never applied to but in moments of exigency, ariſing out of wars, which the preſent ſtate of ſociety in this quarter of the world, permits to be waged with more fury and violence, but happily during ſhorter periods of time, than is the

caſe

caſe with leſs civilized nations. Between theſe we may obſerve wars progreſſively feeble, but longer and more implacable, and as they recede farther from the arts and improvements of ſociety, languid and eternal.

I conſider credit therefore as a ſudden and ruinous way of arriving at the contributions, rendered indeed indiſpenſible by the nature of the modern wars of Europe, but not to be counted abſtractedly as one of the reſources of a country.

I am inclined, in the ſame manner, to look upon the aſſignat implicitly, as an indirect method adopted by the government in France, of laying their hands upon the real reſources of that country*: which mode of conſidering it, if I am not miſtaken, will lead to more certain concluſions, than the complex and metaphyſical manner of treating it as the ſole fund poſſeſſed by them for the carrying on of the war.

Before it had declined through half the ſpace of its preſent depreciation, I confeſs it ap-

* "La Politique," ſays Eſchaſſeriaux, in the name of the commiſſion of five, upon the cauſes of the ſituation of the finances, 22 Brumaire, (Oct. 13.) "Régarde les aſſignats comme un inſtrument, que la révolution a uſé entre les mains de la nation; la diminution de leur valeur comme un *impôt* inſenſible, qui a péſé ſur tous les citoyens."

peared to me probable that it would have operated ſome very important change in the adminiſtration of the finances, and reduced the government to the neceſſity of uſing very extraordinary and eccentric means for arriving at the reſources for which it had occaſion; and though my expectations have not been realized ſo early as I imagined, I think that the period cannot be much longer delayed, and even that I perceive the beginning of it.

Always looking upon the aſſignats in the light I have mentioned, I own I never expected that even their complete annihilation (though hope and neceſſity will perhaps cling to them much longer than can be conceived or explained) would induce an indiſpenſible neceſſity for peace. There appeared to me another *integral period* of difficulty and diſtreſs, through which the pride and pertinacity of France might ſtill ſtruggle, before ſhe arrived at the boundaries of diſorganization, and emerged into the Tartar barbariſm which ſeems the object and crown of her inverted ſyſtem.

The precious metals have long diſappeared and been diſpenſed with; after full four years of decreaſe and decline, they have become extinct or inviſible in the internal commerce and tranſ-

actions

actions of the country*; though they have from time to time re-produced themſelves in the *actual* plunder of the government, or the ſpeculations of the ſtock-jobbers in the rue Vivienne and the Palais Egalité.—Having ſupplied their place by a currency, to which enthuſiaſm at firſt, and afterwards neceſſity and terror gave the impulſe it required, it is no wonder that the government ſhould have been aſtoniſhed at the unexpected means it found in its power, not only by the credit given to its paper, but from ſo great a part of the ſpecie of the empire, which being replaced by a new ſign, they were enabled to tranſport into the neutral countries, which ſupplied them with the fuel and materials of war.

But as this enthuſiaſm ſubſided by degrees, and the ſyſtem of terror received at leaſt a violent interruption and diſcredit, I obſerved the depreciation to tumble with accelerated velocity, and from the enormity of the ſums iſſued by the treaſury, I expected that it would conti-

* We cannot calculate that there exiſts in circulation more than two or three hundred millions in ſpecie, (= to 8 or 12 millions ſterling) and even theſe are in the departments upon the frontiers, &c. *Le Brun, report to the council of elders in the name of the commiſſion of finance.* Dec. 3, 1795.

nue to deſcend with progreſſive rapidity. There remained, however, another experiment, which would preſent ſociety under a new face, and which I thought it likely that extraordinary people would endeavour to realize; namely, to diſpenſe with any ſign altogether, and reduce every contract and tranſaction to the ſimple and original operation of barter, or the exchange of one commodity for another, and a direct contribution of the public impoſitions in kind.

If I am not miſtaken, they are now adopting this deſign, (of which they might have derived the idea from ſome of the colonies of Engliſh America) and that it is their intention to diſpenſe with all intermediate ſigns of value, and make the compariſon direct with the weight or meaſure of corn. I obſerve, that all the ſalaries of the officers of ſtate, &c. under the new conſtitution, are fixed at ſo many quintals of wheat. The contribution called the *forced loan*, is payable in grain, and magazines are to be erected by the government, for their reception; and there is room to believe, that the ſtamp duties and others, which by the late regulations are demanded in ſpecie, will be, or are all convertible into payments in grain; ſo that I think it

poſſible

poſſible, that this ſtaple will quickly become the ſole ſtandard of values in the empire.

It is proper that I ſhould remark here, that by the Tarif ſettled by the legiſlature at the end of the laſt year (1795) for the currency of the aſſignats, it is impoſſible that either grain or ſpecie ſhould enter voluntarily into the granaries or coffers of the republic, becauſe the value being fixed at one hundred livres for one of the nominal value of the aſſignat, aud the aſſignat being as I have mentioned above, at a diſcount upon change of more than twice that ſum, every contributor will ſave a full half of his contingent, by making his payment in that paper. If the *forced loan*, therefore, and the other impoſitions are really exacted, the government will commence by withdrawing the aſſignats from circulation, and finiſh by receiving the taxes in kind; for by the confeſſion of the miniſter of finance*, I am authorized to aſſert, what

* Report of Faipoul to the Executive Directory, Dec. 12.

" In four lines," ſays this miniſter, " the following is the ſtate of the public treaſury.

" It owes ſeventy-two millions in *ſpecie*, twenty millions in bills upon Spain require time—one hundred millions of aſſignats per day, have not hitherto ſupplied a third part of the ſum wanted.

what I would otherwiſe very willingly have taken upon my own reſponſibility, that the whole ſpecie in the empire is inadequate to replace that ſign of values.

By the total diſappearance of an intermediate ſign, if I do not deceive myſelf, the government hopes to be able virtually to renew the *maximum*, and lay hands *directly* upon the articles of neceſſity; and ſuppoſing the endurance and apathy of the people, it is not improbable that they may ſucceed in it for a moment. When the contributions are taken in kind, they will be no longer levied in the counting houſe, but from the ſtacks and granaries of the farmers, the ſhoe-maker will be taxed to furniſh a certain number of ſhoes, the clothier will be called upon in his turn, the government will erect magazines and ſtore-houſes in every diſtrict, and the ſyſtem of public contributions be a direct and general requiſition *.

This

wanted. Fifteen hundred millions which will be paid within this decade, will produce but a feeble ſenſation.

" Citizens Directors, ſuch is the afflicting portrait, &c. We muſt have meaſures to put an end to this frightful ſituation of affairs."

* There is one object which eſſentially demands your ſolicitude; it is the execution of the law which orders the payment

This is the criſis into which I imagine the French government will be thrown by the continued depreciation or extinction of the aſſignats, and not into the direct and immediate neceſſity of deſiſting from hoſtilities, as is preſumed by the gentleman to whom I have alluded, and ſeems to be very generally adopted as an article of political faith in this country. It will not appear, however, that the difference of opinion is fatal between us, becauſe I conſider this criſis as being neceſſarily of very ſhort duration, and that it will quickly conduct them to the period expected by him. But as I have obſerved from the delay and procraſtination that attends the realizing of any opinion, men are not only diſpirited and diſappointed, but led to deſpair, and to conclude, frequently to direct contraries, as people confined by bad weather, cry out at laſt that it will *never* be fine, I have wiſhed to indicate the ſole obſtacle I think likely to happen, if France ſhould adhere to that principle of con-

ment *in kind* of one half of the contribution, for the third year of the republic, (1795).

Letter of the miniſter of the interior, 22d Brumaire.

In the ſame letter he demands from the adminiſtrators of the departments, an account of the *cattle, corn, wine, fruits, hemp, &c.*

queſt,

queſt, which will make ſuch an event abſolutely neceſſary to the peace, independence, and tranquillity of Europe.

I do not think it neceſſary to take much notice in detail of the cedule and the new project of finance, though it might expoſe me to miſrepreſentation if I were to omit it altogether: it appears to me then, both viſionary and wicked; to ſet up a counter-paper to the aſſignat, and to coin ſpecie, is to attempt what is abſurd and what is impoſſible. But I am inclined to conſider it as a meaſure invented by the Government, to facilitate the deſign I have ſuggeſted, and withdraw the ſigns of value altogether; becauſe the very act of decreeing a better ſecurity, than that of the mortgage of the aſſignats, is the moſt violent and indecent mockery of the public faith, and muſt effectually extinguiſh all confidence in any paper whatever, and the creating a quantity of metals equal to repreſent and ſupply it, is, I imagine, an abſolute and real impoſſibility.

Of their late reverſes upon the Rhine, the ſeries of defeats they have ſuffered, and the entire loſs of their army in the Palatinate, I do not think it ſo neceſſary to enquire into the probable effects, as into the immediate cauſes, becauſe

becauſe I ſhould think it very ſuperficial and weak to aſſign them excluſively to the ſkill and bravery of the Imperial generals and armies, or to any particular defect or even inferiority in theſe reſpects, of the forces and commanders of the Republic.—Certainly it would at leaſt be illiberal to conclude that they had not conducted themſelves upon theſe trying occaſions, with all the valour and addreſs, which have long rendered them ſo formidable in the eyes of Europe. But it is not of ſo much importance to remark theſe wounds, which however deep, might not be incurable, or theſe calamities, which however dreadful, might not yet be irreparable; as the cauſes of them, which ſeem to aſſure that they are incurable and irreparable indeed. When we learn* that the army captured in Manheim was deficient in *two-thirds* of its number, by deſertion and the total ſtoppage of recruiting; when we attend to the complaints of the Generals, the ſubſequent meaſures of the directors for the ſupply of the armies of the north, and the increaſed ſeverity of the laws againſt deſerters, at the end of November, can we heſitate to pronounce the progreſs of depopu-

* Vide Gazette Extraordinary, Dec. 11th, 1795.

lation and famine, or doubt the real exhauſture and emptineſs of the empire?

The moral and political ſtate of this unfortunate country, is the next point of view in which I think it important to conſider her. Hitherto I have endeavoured to point out the baſis and conditions of a juſt and adequate pacification, by unavoidable conceſſions on her part, but the preſent diſcuſſion involves the wiſdom and propriety, nay, the poſſibility of making peace with her at all. For unleſs thoſe who are her advocates, or think themſelves her advocates, were egregiouſly miſtaken in ſome of their aſſertions, it would be out of the power of this country, with all its ſuperiority and advantages, to come to a negotiation. It is conſoling in this reſpect to obſerve, that by the experience which the world has ſeen, and France herſelf has acknowledged, of the evils ariſing from her extravagant doctrines and principles, by the ſucceſſive downfall and diſcredit of all her proviſional conſtitutions, by the diſgrace and diſperſion of her clubs and correſponding ſocieties, and by the infamous death and puniſhment of ſo many of her fanatical leaders, by her return towards moderation, by the abjuration of her tenets, and the purging of her Pantheon, the conteſt is become leſs

complicated

complicated and difficult, and the war reduced upon her ſide to a ſimple war of ambition and aggrandizement, in which I have already endeavoured to aſcertain her pretenſions and title to ſucceſs.

There is no longer any queſtion with what form of government, or deſcription of perſons, it is eligible to negotiate. If ever there was any thing of opinion in the cauſes of this war, it has long ſince ſubſided and been at reſt. France herſelf has extinguiſhed it in torrents of her blood, and ſealed it with her own interdiction and anathema. But I know there are perſons who teach, if they do not believe, that her principles are triumphant becauſe her *republic will be acknowledged* at a general pacification; ſuch a doctrine would be contemptible as well as abſurd, if it were not propagated with the moſt malicious and dangerous deſign, namely, to nouriſh and inflame thoſe principles where indeed they have triumphed, if it be triumph to miſlead and corrupt the ignorant and unwary, to join with the weak and the wicked, with the reprobates and outcaſts of every ſociety, to ally and confederate with vice and folly, and finally, with miſery and impatience, with the inevitable hardſhips and repinings of the human

race and condition. Here indeed they have been welcomed, but even here they are obliged to diſſemble and conceal themſelves, to hide their ſhame, and to maſk their deformity.

But it is not in the eſtabliſhment of a republic at home, that the revolutionary principle would have triumphed, if it had not been cruſhed and ſtrangled by that very republic in its cradle. It was in the *republic* of *Great Britain*, in the *republic* of *Spain*, and of the *Empire*, in that of the *whole world*, that it was to have reared the ſtandard of victory. And what a republic? Not ſuch as France has now founded for herſelf, compoſed of orders, ſtates and gradations, (no matter with what ſymmetry or coherence); not a republic of kings and patricians, and commons, as it has now inſtituted (I do not enquire with what temperament and proportion) but a republic of anarchy and confuſion, of confiſcation and pillage, of divorces and murder; a republic of *ſans culottes*, that is to ſay, of proſtitutes and ruffians, of raviſhers and robbers; a republic of theft and force, of brutal violence and luſt, a community of property and of women!

If we are to ſeek for the principles of the revolution, they are ſo far from having triumphed in France, that they are diſavowed and execrated

crated by all parties and deſcriptions in that country; they are to be found, however, and to be found in their ſtatute book, but not in triumph, not even in exiſtence, but cancelled and repealed, branded with infamy, and devoted with the tears and curſes of twenty millions of human beings.

They are to be found in our diſorganizing clubs and ſocieties, whither they ſeem to have fled before the firſt ſteps of returning wiſdom and morality in France; they are to be found amongſt the aſſaſſins of kings and the ſubverters of conſtitutions, in the caverns of guilt, ſpeculation, and deſpair.

The firſt principle of the revolution was to break the leagues and confederacies of Europe, and the mode of action was not only the dethronement, but the murder of kings. Where is the regiment of fourteen hundred aſſaſſins, called Tyrannicides, in the new vocabulary of *uſeful* crimes and *juſtifiable* murders, that were decreed in the Convention? Let us read the comments that are circulated in France, upon the outrage of the Engliſh Jacobins againſt his Majeſty's perſon, in his paſſage to parliament; it is impoſſible to ſpeak of that crime in any terms of horror and execration, in which it is not reprobat-

ed

ed by the journaliſts of France. The Courier Français and the Courier Univerſel in particular, reprove one of the Deputies of the Convention, for the manner in which he had ſpoken of it, "as if, they ſay, any nation would treat with a people that rejoices in the crimes and miſeries of every other." Another paper, under the head of "revolutionary movements at London," enters more minutely into the ſubject, and laments with a deepneſs and ſincerity of ſorrow that might well become every Engliſhman to feel and expreſs, the poſſibility of any revolution being attempted in England. Has the principle, therefore, of *tyrannicide* triumphed? does it ſurvive any where but in the den of Engliſh anarchiſts and confounders, and is it not criminated even by their quondam confederates in France?

Has the principle of *equality* proved triumphant? let us look at the robes of ſtate, the pretorian guards, and the enormous ſalaries of the *five lords commiſſioners of the monarchy*; let us look too at the council of ancients, (their upper houſe of parliament) at their habits of ceremony, their ſalaries, their guards, and the royal palaces they both inhabit. Has not equality been defined and frittered away to mean

nothing

nothing but equality before the law, a right to be tried by the ſame tribunals, or to be candidate for the ſame employments? an equality more fully enjoyed in England during a century at leaſt, than it can be poſſible for France, ſuppoſing an immediate end to her commotions, to enjoy it for a century to come. By the third article of the declaration of rights, which is to be conſidered as a kind of preamble to the conſtitution, *hereditary* rank is indeed formally aboliſhed, that is, as far as it is capable of being ſo by a declaration: but hereditary honours, and the importance attached to birth and particular families, cannot be deſtroyed by any poſitive law or inſtitution, or hindered from giving favour and authority to the pretenſions of candidates, ſo that the deſcendants of great and popular perſons, will continue to have any advantage over new and unknown ones, and the part of this principle which appears to be adopted, is trivial or nugatory ſo far as it regards *the people*. But is any equality of property or condition, which is *their* promiſed equality, triumphant? The very *firſt* article of the declaration of rights, takes property under its protection, and it is farther ſecured by the 358*th* proviſion of the conſtitution; ſo that equality has

ſhared

ſhared the fate of tyrannicide, that is to ſay, after having ſpent its rage, and covered France with crimes and calamities, it has been conſigned to ſhame and oblivion. But it is important to keep its infamy alive, and in memory, as a negative example to France herſelf, to Europe, and to poſterity.

Has the principle of *annual legiſlatures* and *univerſal ſuffrage* proved triumphant? The legiſlative aſſemblies are renewed partially every year, namely, in one third part, which is exactly equivalent to a triennial re-election of the whole*. But the right of voting is ſo far from being univerſal, that it is limited to property, and to the contribution of property, for though it is declared† that every *citizen* has an equal right to vote for the repreſentatives, &c. the right of *citizenſhip* is afterwards reſtricted ‡ to thoſe who pay a direct contribution, real or perſonal, to reſidents, and to perſons inſcribed in the regiſter of the diſtrict, and every ſpecies of domeſtic ſervant is expreſsly deprived of it during his continuance in that ſituation§; ſo that neither of theſe prin-

* Art. 53, de la conſtitution.

† 8th Article of the Declaration of Rights.

‡ In the 8th article of the conſtitution.

§ Title 2d of the conſtitution. Art. 10, and ſubſequent Art.

ciples,

ciples, I imagine, will be pronounced to have been triumphant.

I now come to ſpeak of another principle, the triumph of which under our own peculiar circumſtances at this time, might have been of no trifling importance; but fortunately, the experience and conſequent rejection of it in France, have preceded and facilitated its defeat in this country; namely, the principle of *clubs, aſſociations, public harangues, debates and correſpondences.* I had originally intended to have extracted ſome part of the ſpeeches of Bourdon, Tallien, Legendre, and others of the principal orators in France, from the denunciations which took place previous to the ſhutting up of the Jacobins, and from the reports which preceded the abolition of the popular ſocieties*. But I abſtain from them; for I will not found any thing upon the confeſſions or ſentiments of men, without much probity or ſhame. I do not conſider their opinions upon moſt topics to be totally exempt from intereſtedneſs, *occaſionality*, and violence; and the ſuppreſſion of the clubs being now made a part of the *fundamental* and *unalterable* laws of the republic; I ſhall be able

* Sixth fructidor, Auguſt 22, 1793.

to eſtabliſh this part of my argument with more certainty, preciſion, and force, from the proviſions of the conſtitution itſelf.

By that conſtitution it is ordained,

That "there cannot be formed any corporations or aſſociations contrary to the public order*."

That "no aſſembly of citizens ſhall take the name of popular ſociety†."

That "no particular ſociety occupying itſelf in (the diſcuſſion of) political ſubjects, can *correſpond* with any other, nor *affiliate* itſelf with it, nor hold *public* ſittings, compoſed of the members and aſſiſtants (or auditors), diſtinguiſhed from each other, nor impoſe conditions of *election* or *admiſſion*, nor aſſume the right of *excluding*, nor cauſe its members to carry any outward ſign of their aſſociation‡."

"That the citizens cannot exerciſe their political rights out of the primary aſſemblies, or thoſe of the communes§."

"That the citizens are at liberty to addreſs petitions to the public authorities; but they muſt be *individual* petitions. *No aſſociation* can pre-

* Conſtitution, Art. 1. Tit. 14.

† Art. 360.

‡ Conſt. Art. 362. § Conſt. Art. 363.

ſent

ſent them in their collective capacity, excepting the conſtituted authorities: and theſe only upon account of objects peculiar to their own departments" (attribution).

"The petitioners muſt not forget the *reſpect* due to the conſtituted authorities*."

And by that conſtitution it is ordained, "that every groupe, mob, or aſſemblage (attroupement) of the people, is to be *inſtantly* diſperſed at the *word of command*, or to be attacked by the *military*."

This is the actual ſtate of liberty in France as it regards popular meetings, aſſemblages of the people in the ſtreets or fields, clubs, lectures, debates, even the ſacred and unalienable right of petition; and I imagine that not even thoſe perſons who *ſuffer* moſt under the action of the late bills for the ſecurity of his Majeſty's perſon, and the coercion of ſeditious meetings; not even Mr. *Thelwall* himſelf, will be willing to exchange our exiſting laws upon theſe objects for thoſe of our neighbouring republic, where it is not eaſy to perceive how any man can get a direct livelihood by haranguing againſt the government and conſtitution.

It is remarkable, however, and it leads me to

* Conſt. Art. 364.

the collateral conſideration of another revolutionary principle of no mean importance, which had well nigh eſcaped me in the croud, namely, that of the *ſovereignty* of the majority of individuals of every ſociety; I ſay, it is remarkable that upon this occaſion none of the demagogues have thought proper to remind the green and unfledged republicans of France of their *right to reſiſt*, and of *prudent inſurrections* the moſt ſacred of all their duties. It is, indeed, altogether extraordinary, and ſhews the effect of a dreadful experience both upon the popular leaders and upon the people. The firſt, no doubt, are become afraid of the violent machine they can ſet in motion, but can never controul; and the ſecond, weary of being diſturbed to no end, and agitated without direction or object, deſire nothing but an indolent repoſe, and will yield their metaphyſical ſceptre to any hand, not only that can govern them well, but that can govern them at all.

With the ſovereignty of the people atheiſm ſeems to have fallen to the ground. Atheiſm ſo convenient to the doctrine of ſacred, or of prudent revolt. "The people* purſued by ſo

* Vide a Pariſian Journaliſt, extracted in the 29th number of M. Peltier's Paris, p. 241.

many

many calamities, demand only a change in their condition—they ſhew upon every occaſion *the greateſt averſion to political affairs*—in the country and the cities the churches are every where crowded with a pious people, pouring out their regrets in the boſom of *religion*."—With the ſovereignty and the philoſophy of the people another principle of the revolution has been extinguiſhed, namely, that of public proſtitution, of the arbitrary divorce of wives by huſbands, and of huſbands by wives*. The political ſtate of women, their rights and liberties have diſappeared out of the code of the new conſtitution; but to purity, to domeſtic happineſs and honour, the ſource of every private and public good, to the nice relations of tenderneſs and ſentiment, there is no return: the delicate ſex that even "the airs of heaven may viſit too rudely," withers and fades with the firſt breath of vice, the morals of the people, according to their own mutual accuſations and confeſſions, are entirely vitiated—vitiated I fear irretrievably; for of all the barriers and Alps that lay between France and liberty, the moſt impenetrable, the moſt inſurmountable, the moſt impervious is the

* The laws reſpecting divorces were ſuſpended by a decree of the Convention, Aug. 2, 1795—(15 thermidor)

extreme

extreme and univerſal corruption of their manners, a corruption which, as far as I have had any opportunity of obſerving, is at once that of brutal luxury and barbarous refinement.

The principles of the revolutionary ſyſtem having been therefore completely unfolded, are very generally exploded in France, and their whole force of poiſon may be regarded as ſpent and evaporated; a circumſtance I beg leave to inſiſt upon the more, becauſe I am ready to confeſs, that if I did not regard it as having effectually taken place, I would never adviſe nor conſent to a pacification with that country, in any caſe ſhort of an abſolute neceſſity, ariſing out of our own calamities and exhauſture, out of an *actual* weakneſs and inability. But fortunately, not only thoſe principles have periſhed, but the authors and heroes of them, whoſe fate has been juſtly implicated with the pernicious and deſtructive doctrines upon which they built their fugitive popularity and greatneſs; I ſay *fortunately*, not that I rejoice in the ſufferings and puniſhment of thoſe unhappy perſons, for wickedneſs itſelf is pitiable in its retribution; it is in triumph and ſucceſs alone, that it is an object of vengeance or hatred; but becauſe ſuch examples are neceſſary to impreſs

preſs the obtuſe capacity of the multitude, to deter and terrify, for ages to come, and to mark, by viſible examples, the expiation of public guilt, and the periods of returning juſtice and reaſon.

It is not the men whoſe perſonal flagitiouſneſs and crimes; it is not they whoſe atrocity and ferociouſneſs, whoſe invention and refinement, whoſe exceſs and obduracy in guilt, have diſhonoured, not France alone, but human nature, that I ſhould ſelect from the common and undiſtinguiſhing atonement. It is not the Heberts and Chaumettes, the Marats and Dantons, the Carriers and Robeſpierres; but the perſons who made pretence to virtue and philoſophy, and abſtained themſelves from the general immorality, they let looſe upon their country, that I ſhould hold up to mark the downfal of the fanaticiſm they preached. Petion and Roland, Briſſot and Condorcet, the meteor heroes of the revolution, where are they, and their coadjutors and diſciples? If one of them has eſcaped the common fate of his companions, or if they could cry from the tomb, they would ſpeak, I think, in the words of the poet:

Infanda per orbem
Supplicia et ſcelerum pœnas expendimus omnes!

Since

Since I am upon the ſubject of theſe unfortunate perſons, it occurs to me to ſay a few words upon their peculiar enthuſiaſm, and to conſider the principles of the revolution in what may be called their *beau jour*, their beſt point of view, to throw a glance over that amiable and ſeductive ſide which they firſt preſented to ſenſible and ſanguine goodneſs, juſt as they offered afterwards equality and licentiouſneſs to the ſenſual and corrupted. This may be called the philoſophy *par excellence* of the revolution, and deſerves a much longer and more careful conſideration than falls within the ſcope and utility of my preſent deſign. It is indeed ſo mixed and blended with whatever can raviſh or enchant the imagination, whatever is pleaſing to admit in idea or abſtraction; ſo amiable in error, ſo delightful in extravagance, that it is painful to the ſtrongeſt minds to return from it towards the dullneſs of truth and reality. It is no wonder, therefore, that ſo many ardent and ſuſceptible ſpirits ſhould prefer to remain in an enchanted labyrinth of their own creation, without track or limits, to travelling in the rough and hackneyed path of practicable virtue and attainable perfection.

This is the natural error of all thoſe who ſpeculate

ſpeculate upon public good, in ſituations which preclude them from any great probability of contributing to it, by any thing elſe but their ſpeculations; as they never expect to be called into action, or that the promiſes they give will one day be demanded at their hands, they grant with a boundleſs generoſity, and bleſs with "a perpetual giving hand." And ſurely, it would be cruel and illiberal to withhold any thing of what is ſo eaſy to part with as metaphyſical benevolence and wiſdom, of what is ſo well received abroad, and is ſo unprofitable or pernicious at home.

The misfortune of France, in the outſet of her revolution (a misfortune from which all the reſt have derived in a right and lineal ſucceſſion) was, that her philoſophers who made it, were never educated nor intended to have power, nor could ever have dreamed of poſſeſſing it; hence they ſcattered abſtract and viſionary notions with an incautious hand, imprudent and irreſponſible, creating Eutopias and Oceanas, Societies and Commonwealths, of which the firſt and moſt glaring abſurdity is, that they never could be inhabited by human beings, by citizens of fleſh and blood.

While they groaned over the vices and pal-

pable corruptions of governments, they forgot the imperfections of nature and the frailty of man; and paſſing a general act of amneſty and oblivion for the common faults and weakneſſes of humanity, they were careful to except thoſe perſons upon whom were caſt the great parts and characters in the drama of the world. Upon them they charged the crimes, the miſeries, and the ignorance of the great body of our race, condemned by an indiſpenſible condition of exiſtence, to cultivate or ſubdue her in the fields, and to ſupply or imitate her in the cities. Unfortunately their own government was too guilty of a great part of the accuſation, to be able to repel the reſt; for the labouring claſſes were oppreſſed and degraded by a pernicious ſyſtem of finance and feodality, to a degree that made it hard to ſeparate and diſtinguiſh the natural from the political evil.

I haſten over this intereſting and important ſubject, which I wiſh rather to point out than inveſtigate, and confine myſelf to obſerve, that if the philoſophy that undertook to relieve theſe grievances, had been able to analyze and attribute them to their true cauſes, it might have removed the political ill, without corrupting the moral

moral agent, or diſturbing the natural condition; but knowing no object, and feeling no care but to ſpeculate and dream of viſionary amendment, it confounded every thing with an ignorant benevolence; and mixing the abuſes of power, with the hardſhips of the human lot and exiſtence, taught the people to throw off with the reſpect for their ancient inſtitutions, and eſtabliſhed government, every ſanction of morality, every paſſive virtue; their ſubmiſſion to the will of heaven, with that to the monarchy, and their religion together with their allegiance.

One of the moſt ſublime and brilliant of theſe deluſive dreams, was what was called in the lofty language of the revolution, the endleſs *perfectibility* of the human ſpecies*; for ſince all its weakneſs, errors and calamities, were now demonſtrated to flow excluſively from evil governments, it followed that they would be cut off in their ſource and dried up for ever, by the ſimple inſtitution of good ones; if indeed, it were not to be expected that ſociety as it advanced towards perfection, would maintain itſelf without government at all, by conſent of virtues, and uniformity of will.

* Condorcet, eſquiſſe d'un tableau hiſtorique des progrès de l'eſpèce humaine, chap. dernier.

This principle, however, has been abandoned with the reſt after a baneful experience. After having ſwelled the vanity and inflamed the rancour of the people, after having cauſed every ſpecies of excellence to be conſidered as an uſurpation and an injury, and levelled the ariſtocracy of talents and virtues, with this of birth, and that of property, it is conſigned to oblivion—"We muſt not, ſays Lepeau* one of the kings whom the French have preferred to Louis the XVIth, we muſt not make to ourſelves any chimerical idea of the perfection of man, he is nearly the ſame at all times," a cruel ſentence, remarkable for the coldneſs and phlegm with which it is delivered, but more remarkable for its inſolence and falſhood, as he muſt well know who has ſo long ſpeculated upon the ignorance and credulity, the paſſions and prejudices of the people, and depraved and brutalized a whole nation, till it is become patient of him and his colleagues, after having murdered a prince, whoſe only fault was to think it capable of virtue or amendment.

There remains therefore no danger from the brilliant chimeras, any more than from the viſi-

* Rapport au nom de la commiſſion des onze.

ble

ble deformity of thoſe principles which have deſolated France. Not one of them has triumphed, and only one remains in exiſtence. This one, however, contains the ſeeds of all the reſt, for all would revive and ſpring up again in foreign ſtates, if France were permitted to *preſerve her conqueſts and deſtroy the equilibrium of Europe.* Cured herſelf by experience, ſhe would ſpread around her the miſchiefs ſhe baniſhed from her own boſom; ſhe would corrupt with the poiſons ſhe has vomited; and, conquering with one hand and contaminating with the other, ſhe would impreſs upon the nations that true diſorganizing impulſe which would make them revolve for ever round her own endleſs revolutions.

But, though no principle of the revolution appears to have met with long ſucceſs, or to be finally triumphant; the acknowledgement of the republic, which is virtually made by his majeſty's meſſage of the 8th December ult. has been, I cannot perceive upon what grounds, interpreted by ſome perſons, as a ſacrifice or humiliation upon the part of Great Britain. If it were ſo, I profeſs I think the time and circumſtances under which it was made, namely, the bankruptcy of the enemy, and the ſucceſſive defeats

and

and diſaſters they had encountered in Germany, the moſt extraordinary that his ſervants could have ſelected, for adviſing him to any meaſure unpleaſant or derogatory to his feelings or pretenſions; I am inclined however to think, that there will be found conſiderably more of magnanimity than of mortification not only in the time and circumſtances, but in the language and ſentiments of that meſſage. Still it has been ſuſpected, that the adminiſtration were adverſe to the acknowledgment of the republic, and therefore that this ſtep is painful and humiliating to them. Upon this ſubject it is important to be explicit and perſpicuous, becauſe the opinion is capable of cauſing much miſchief or deluſion.

I have little doubt, then, that it would have been more ſatisfactory to the feelings of the king's miniſters, and to thoſe of every honeſt and ſenſible mind in his majeſty's dominions, if the ſucceſſes of this war had been ſo general and complete on the one hand, and if the diſtreſſes and calamities of France on the other, had ſo perfectly and effectually opened her eyes upon the inaptitude of a republican form of government to her phyſical and moral ſituation, that the iſſue of both combined ſhould have been the reſtoration of the monarchy; I ſay, I have no

doubt

doubt that ſuch would have been their wiſhes, as I have no ſcruple to acknowledge that ſuch are my own.—They include the return of the exiles, and a period to that maſs of individual miſery and perſecution, which is without a parallel in the hiſtory of the world, unleſs perhaps in the ſubverſion of the weſtern empire, when whatever was civilized became the prey of whatever was barbarous; and an effeminate and diſſolute world was plundered and oppreſſed by a rude and ſavage race, that ſeemed freſh from nature, and vomited by the earth.

This, I think that they, and whoever can feel or reaſon in theſe kingdoms, muſt have deſired with them—*Diis aliter viſum eſt.* They have no power over fate, or controul upon neceſſity; if they had, they would be fearfully reſponſible for throwing away their arms, and acknowledging *even this* republic. Not that they, or the conſtitution of this country, have any thing to apprehend, as I think it is inſinuated, from its neighbourhood, or example. But that France herſelf has every thing to apprehend and to dread from it, but becauſe it is incompatible with the tranquillity and repoſe of France herſelf, and becauſe the turbulence and revolutions of France are incompatible with the tranquillity and repoſe of this country, and of Europe.

But

But we muſt not forget, or overlook, in the luſtre and dazzle of our own fortune and comparative proſperity, the *misfortunes of our allies*; the ſpoliation and diſmemberment of Europe; our own loſſes and privations; and, above all, the criminal danger of rejecting comparative good, for a ſpeculative and problematical *better*. —If, at this peace, we ſhall reinſtate them in all their poſſeſſions, reſtore the balance of Europe, and indemnify ourſelves, I proteſt, I ſhall never blame the government for acknowledging, nor apprehend any ſerious danger from the example of the tottering and deciduous republic they acknowledge.

I do not even admit, that the conſtitution of Great Britain would have any thing to apprehend from the eſtabliſhment of a republican form of government in France, though it were ſimple and perfect in its kind, and adjuſted to the ſoil, genius, manners, population, and extent of her territory, though, in one word it were fortunate and triumphant. I think the excellent modification of our conſtitution would not only reſiſt, but yield with ſecurity; for two of its integral parts are already republican; and beſides this, it is peculiarly worthy of remark, that the municipal government of the kingdom is wholly and univerſally republican.

If

If there could ever have exiſted any danger to the monarchical part of our conſtitution, from a compariſon of *expence* with the pretended cheapneſs of a republican form of government, which I am far from admitting, the preſent eſtabliſhments, and ſtill more the ſyſtem and principle of France, have totally removed it. For though the malevolence of party may have made the ignorant conſider the whole of the civil liſt as an appanage of royalty; though the expences of the civil government, of the adminiſtration of juſtice, the ſalaries of the great officers of ſtate, the neceſſary rewards or encouragements of talents and activity, and the honourable relief of the meritorious and unhappy, are carefully forgotten whenever the civil liſt is ſounded in the ears of the people, yet the people cannot fail to diſcover, that under whatever form the public impoſitions are levied, or to whatever direction they are nominally attributed, that government muſt, in fact, be maintained at the cheapeſt expence, which exacts the ſmalleſt contributions from their purſes. When they ſee, therefore, a republican taxgatherer bearing off cloth or corn to a republican warehouſe; or read a republican law for enabling the people to ſell their furniture, in order to pay their quota of a forced loan to a republican government, and for impriſoning a

dilatory republican lender, they will eaſily infer that their own government is in effect cheaper, if it were only becauſe they need not give their ſhoes to the army, nor put their beds up to ſale, in order to avoid the jail, or the ſcaffold, which fill up the back ground of this horrible picture.

But if theſe atrocious cruelties and extortions were to diſappear at the period of returning peace, there would ſtill ariſe out of the ſtate and extravagance of the directory, and the number of their officers and aſſiſtants, out of more than forty thouſand diſtinct adminiſtrations, maintained and paid by the indiviſible republic, out of the ſalaries of the members of both houſes of the French parliament, and the innumerable millions delivered to the ſecret diſcretion of the ſeveral miniſters, which form a part of *the civil liſt of the republic*, a compariſon too prominent and glaring, to leave any thing to be apprehended for the decent magnificence of the monarchy of England.

One danger, however, and by no means a trivial and light one, will ariſe from the eſtabliſhment of the actual republic we diſcover in France: not, indeed, from its excellency or ſuperiority over our own conſtitution, but from its conſcious inferiority and feebleneſs, which there is reaſon to fear may incline it to ſeek a

ſpecies

ſpecies of ſafety in the commotions and diſturbances of foreign countries.

A bad government is always a bad neighbour; and we have four years of uninterrupted experience that it is ſo: but a bad government, ingrafted upon the reſtleſs character of a ruined and corrupted people, is the worſt and moſt dangerous of all; and the *irruption* that may be expected, immediately after the peace, from that country, is not the leaſt or lighteſt of the evils for which his majeſty's miniſters may have to deviſe an antidote or a remedy.

If *this* republic, however, is to be conſidered as a wiſe, ſalutary, and durable inſtitution, calculated for the happineſs of France, and capable of giving tranquillity to Europe, it will remain impoſſible, under that point of view, to diſcover any thing in agreeing to it, which ought to be repugnant or humiliating to the feelings of his majeſty's ſervants. But if it is even now tottering towards change or diſſolution, as I confeſs it is my own individual belief and opinion, and is only ſo far calculated to reſtore peace and reſt to the boſom of that criminal and bleeding country, as it is the intermediate and preparatory ſtep to the reſtoration of monarchy, and of the antient *fundamental* laws and government of the land; if all that is eſtimable, or even pardonable in it, is the public abjuration of pure

and unqualified democracy; and the ſpectacle of rank, gradation, and authority, once more repreſented and rendered familiar to the people.—If this is the true light and colour in which it ought to be beheld, then I imagine *a-fortiori*, that no man will be bold or perfidious enough to aſſert, that miniſters have abandoned or departed from any part of their object, ſo far as the reſtoration of a rational government to France, might have entered into their conſideration, as one of the reſults of a favourable iſſue of the war. I think, on the contrary, that, as the war was not carried on for the attainment of this object, (though circumſtances ſoon pointed it out as one of the beſt means both of terminating the quarrel with celerity, and fixing the peace upon the true and ſolid baſis of reciprocal advantage and ſecurity,) they could never in any caſe, even in that of compleat diſcomfiture and failure, have been thought to have abandoned, or yielded any condition which they were bound to obtain by any ſpecies of engagement whatſoever; and that having arrived at a point at which the power and the reſources of the enemy are no longer formidable, and from which it is reaſonable to foreſee, and preſume ſtill further returns towards the eſtabliſhment of a mixed and practicable conſtitution, it would, in any view of the caſe, be cruel and wrong to continue the

war

war upon that account, or to exact, at the ſword's point, the expreſs ſtipulation of things which they never aſſumed the right to preſcribe, but which they have reaſon to expect from the reſtoration of peace, and from the preſent condition of France.

Under theſe circumſtances, we find ourſelves in a ſituation and capacity to negociate, and the king's meſſage to parliament*, has effectually removed any opinion which might have been entertained of a diſinclination in his majeſty's ſervants to treat with the executive directory of France. All difficulties in the way to peace have been effectually removed, on the part of Great Britain, and the war, being reduced to the ſimple and ordinary nature of all former conteſts, might inſtantly determine, if the French government could be induced, either by the ſenſe of the internal miſery and calamities of their people, or by the deſpair of creating any domeſtic diſturbances in England, to depart from the decree of *September* 30, 1795, and abandon the *exterior principle*, as they have done every other principle of the revolution.

Their obſtinacy upon this article may, perhaps, have been conſiderably impaired by the recent and important ſucceſſes of the Auſtrian arms, by the viſible approach of bankruptcy and famine, and by the diſappointment of any

* December 8, 1795.

expectations

expectations they might have entertained of a political exploſion in this country. They muſt have remarked, in the firſt place, the univerſal ſenſe of the kingdom, moſt unequivocally declared in ſo many addreſſes to the throne and to the parliament; they muſt have obſerved the reſults of a proſperity, hitherto unknown and incredible, during three years of the moſt violent and univerſal hoſtility, in which their own country has been completely exhauſted of all its means and reſources; the high value of the public funds, the competition for the loan, and the unhoped-for lightneſs of the new taxes, cannot have eſcaped their attention; they muſt have ſeen, that not a ſingle article of neceſſity is comprized in them, at a time when their own laſt deſperate remedy conſiſts only in the hope of laying hands upon every article of neceſſity, by a forcible levy of them from the ſeveral proprietors in kind.

And if they cannot fail to make this humiliating compariſon at home, I would aſk what conſolation they can derive from enlarging their proſpect, and bring the whole theatre of the war under their contemplation. I forbear to enumerate thoſe circumſtances, which are diſtreſſing and diſaſtrous; it is better to conſider France upon that ſide where ſhe counts her acquiſitions, and paſſes for proſperous and triumphant.

I was always of opinion that her conqueſts would

would be burthenſome to her during the war, notwithſtanding the temporary relief and aſſiſtance ſhe might draw from them by her requiſitions and forcible contributions; and as it becomes evident that ſhe cannot retain them at the general peace, it is probable that ſhe would inſtantly withdraw her armies from the greateſt part of them, if ſhe did not expect to make advantage of them in the negotiation, by exacting conceſſions, in the nature of an equivalent, from Great Britain; in every other point of view, they have certainly been hurtful to her, if any thing is finally to be conſidered in that light which has accelerated the period of pacification, by extending and attenuating her efforts, in the ſame proportion that they diverted and exhauſted her means and reſources. But ſhe can never forget that, by the conqueſt of Holland, ſhe made a direct preſent to England of the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon, probably of Batavia, and all the Dutch colonies, which would be an immenſe ſource of commercial wealth and aggrandizement to that power, even during the war, if it were to continue; whereas all the advantage ſhe could expect from the occupation of the Dutch territory in Europe, deprived and cut off from its dependencies, reſolved itſelf into a reverſion and ſpeculation of profit ſubſequent to the peace.

In

In the Netherlands the conduct of France affords a more unequivocal proof that ſhe never dreamed of preſerving them; becauſe ſhe reduced her whole views to the uſufruct or waſte of the moment, ranſoming the inhabitants, and exporting every thing, even to the tools of induſtry and materials of agriculture; in the ſame manner, finding it impoſſible to retain her colonies in the Weſt-Indies, ſhe endeavoured, in the language of the revolution, to *neutralize* or render them unprofitable to whatever ſtate might acquire them. Here beſides the natural ruin of thoſe beautiful plantations, and the free ſcope ſhe gave to fire and deſtruction, ſhe unchained a ſpirit, which I fear will be found too powerful for the arts or arms of all Europe to ſubdue. Not contented with the ſpoil and havoc of her own unfortunate iſlands, ſhe extended her atrocious policy to the colonies of England, and endeavoured to lay the foundations of a negro empire in the weſtern Archipelago. It is not neceſſary to the ſubject I am treating, that I ſhould enquire, without minuteneſs, into the degree of her ſucceſs, or the poſſibility of deviſing a remedy; it is ſufficient that the ſyſtem of waſte and deſtruction ſhe purſued ſhould eſtabliſh the fact, that ſhe never expected to retain theſe poſſeſſions at the peace; and that it has ſucceeded, ſo far at leaſt as to render them

of

of very inferior value to whatever power may be ſuppoſed likely to acquire them; not only Martinico, for inſtance, and the other iſlands, which I take for granted ſhe is ready to ſurrender, are diminiſhed in their value and ſecurity, but many of our own ſettlements have been almoſt equally deſtroyed and corrupted; ſo that it may ſeriouſly be doubted, in the preſent circumſtances, whether thoſe parts of the world have not loſt, at leaſt for a very long time to come, the greateſt part of their original value, and conſequently whether they contain the juſt conſideration and materials of any equivalent whatſoever.

But I know not, I confeſs, under what tenure or ſecurity, ſhort of the abſolute union of them all under one and the ſame metropolitan power, they are likely to be retained, or to exiſt. There muſt not, I think, be an *analogy*, but an identity of government, if they are to remain the property of any of the ſtates of Europe; for I cannot perceive any proſpect, or entertain the ſhadow of an hope that France, at any future period of time, ſhould be inclined to prefer the preſervation of thoſe colonies which might be left to her at the peace, to the deſtruction of ours, which would always remain at her mercy, if we were to hold them by no better tenure than an *analogy* between the governments: particularly if it were ſo to happen, that

we were underſtood to receive out of theſe colonies any conſiderable part of our indemnity for the expences of the war, and of our equivalent for her own acquiſitions in Europe. How ſmall would be the direct and poſitive intereſt of France, in her circumſcribed and diminiſhed plantations, how ſubordinate and ſecondary to that abominable delight ſhe might take in inflicting the ſevereſt wounds upon her rival, with ſo little prejudice and danger to herſelf?

If the retaining, beſides, of our colonies, is to depend upon an analogy in the reſpective governments, that analogy muſt make one of the reciprocal conditions in the articles of peace, and will depend upon the obſervation of a treaty, which it will be the intereſt of one of the contracting parties to violate.—For the performance of ſuch ſtipulations, I apprehend no other ſecurity can poſſibly be deviſed, than an equality and reciprocity of intereſt in our common poſſeſſions. But this would reduce us, in that part of the world, very nearly to the *ſtatus quo* before the war, and preclude us from all poſſibility of finding indemnity or equivalent in the Weſt Indies.

While I am upon this ſubject of *equivalent*, and to prevent the neceſſity of returning to it in another place, I ſhall take the opportunity of confeſſing, that I am aware of no circumſtances,

ſtances, under the actual or relative ſituation of the contending parties; which ought to call this ſubject into diſcuſſion at all. I think it is incompatible with the honour of Great Britain; her engagements with her allies, and the peace and independence of Europe, of which ſhe is the protector and guarantee, to admit it at all into deliberation; and that no peace, which can embrace theſe intereſts and duties, can be negociated upon any other footing than the *ſtatus quo ante bellum*, with ſuch indemnities to Great Britain as ſhe is entitled to by the events of the war.

It is the general ſyſtem and balance of power, for which we are contending, (though perhaps, if it is poſſible, ſtill dearer and nearer intereſts are involved in it) it is the independence of this great commonwealth of Europe, which our arms have vindicated and aſſerted; and I will never admit any baſis of peace, which ſhould abandon, or compromiſe, or expoſe it. Much leſs could I bring myſelf to behold with temper or forbearance, the ſpectacle of the two great powers, which have attacked and defended its liberties, rearing the altar of peace upon its cinders, and dividing the ſpoil and plunder with a common violence, but an unequal depravity. For France would be guilty only of a crime of force, which would come home laden to the

boſom of Great Britain, with all the acccumulated guilt of fraud, treachery, and perfidiouſneſs.

When I ſpeak of the *ſtatus quo ante bellum*, it cannot be ſuppoſed that, after ſo many violent ſhocks and convulſions, it can be replaced exactly, and in all its parts, upon its former foundations; or that every local variation which may have taken place, every change of conſtitution, or of foreign connexions, is a juſt cauſe for continuing the war. Thoſe countries, in particular, which have not been true to their own cauſe, whoſe cowardice, indifference, or treachery, is the ſource of their actual derangement, cannot expect their internal intereſts to be adopted by the generality of Europe, after the firſt poſſibility of ſecuring the common independence by a juſt and ſecure pacification. Every thing local, every perſonal intereſt muſt diſappear before this great and imperious neceſſity: a barrier muſt be provided againſt the unconquerable ſpirit of uſurpation, and the natural predominance of France. Of this every ſtate is convinced by a fearful experience; the emperor in particular, who will poſſeſs thoſe fertile and populous provinces, by an uncertain and precarious tenure, as long as they lie open to the firſt incurſions of the republic, will haſten to repair the errors of Joſeph the Second, and reſtore the defences of the Netherlands. The

other

other provinces of the Low Countries, to whoſe diſorders I have alluded, if they do not ſhake off, by their own efforts, the yoke of the fatal connexion they have formed with ſo much cowardice and criminality, will thus at leaſt be rendered an inferior and leſs dangerous acquiſition to the uſurper; and at any rate, the liberties and independence of Europe may yet be defended in another war, inſtead of being liable to be overwhelmed by the firſt armed emigrations of Frenchmen!

There is another circumſtance which can ſcarcely eſcape the obſervations of France, namely, that notwithſtanding the facility with which the loan has been made, and the lightneſs of the taxes, we have conſiderably diminiſhed our eſtabliſhments and reduced the expences, by circumſcribing the operations of the war. She muſt have obſerved in the eſtimates for the current year a reduction of 800,000l. ſterling, in the army alone; and if ſhe ſtill cheriſhes any hope of inſurrection, ſhe muſt obſerve, that, by the recalling of all our forces from the continent, it is ſcarcely poſſible for any of her friends to recommend that meaſure to the public as *prudent*, under our actual circumſtances and ſituation.

If ſhe entertains any ſanguine expectation from the dreadful viſitation of ſcarcity, ſhe cannot poſſibly forget to obſerve, that this danger

is common to both countries, and nearer and greater in her own; and that if there is a period before us, when ſhe might take advantage of our languor and debility, it can only be upon the ſuppoſition that ſhe herſelf ſhould remain in health and vigour: all our privations and ſufferings will avail her nothing, while her own are more poignant and unendurable. The carcaſe of France cannot come to inſult the ſickneſs of Great Britain.

But I cannot apprehend that ſhe will ever ſeriouſly rely for any hope of extrication from her preſent calamities, upon the uneaſineſs and impatience of this country under its own. Not only becauſe ſhe muſt ſtarve while we are upon allowance, but becauſe the war is perhaps favourable to England in this particular, in the ſame degree as it is ruinous to France, by ſhutting her from the granaries, or intercepting the commerce of America, the Baltic and the Mediterranean. Theſe markets are all open to England, but as ſoon as peace arrives, if the ſcarcity were to continue, ſhe would meet a French commiſſary in every one of them, whom the greater neceſſities of his country would compel to outbid her every where, or at leaſt to advance the price to an enormous and incalculable increaſe.

The corn trade at different periods of the war,

war, has been permitted and denied to France by our fleets, which actually formed the blockade of that country; independently of any reasons which might arise from general laws and usage, from particular treaties, or policy respecting neutral powers, it might be difficult to determine which of the alternatives, adopted at the different times I have alluded to, was the most wise and advantageous to Great Britain; for, though her enemy has doubtless suffered many partial inconveniences and disasters by her captures, I think a more general and universal wound has been inflicted by the avarice and extortion of the neutral powers, and the interested assistance they have been permitted to lend her.

It appears certain, that not only the cargoes, freight, and insurance were regularly paid for in specie for the French consuls or commissaries, in the neutral countries, before the vessels proceeded, but that a deposit was exacted equal to the value of the ship's bottom, in case of capture or shipwreck, and of detention in the French ports: for the government was often unable to restrain the violence of the populace, and frequently, before these precautions, obliged, by its own necessities, to take similar liberties with the property of its good friends and allies.

It is almoſt ſuperfluous to remark, how violently ſuch a commerce muſt have drained the precious metals out of France*.—The ſpecie of that country, from the conſequences of emigration, and, probably, from the precaution and ſpeculations of thoſe who have not emigrated, had long ſince begun to ooze into all the countries of Europe; her armies, and the hazardous traffic ſhe was forced to ſubmit to for their maintenance, opened the dykes ſtill wider, and the torrent has flowed without reflux or relaxation.

If I were enquiring into the cauſes of the almoſt total diſappearance of the precious metals in that country, I ſhould not forget to mention that maſs of them which has returned into the bowels of the earth, which fear and danger have ingeniouſly concealed, which has been buried by hands now buried, and in places guarded by the ſilence of oblivion, and the ſecrecy of the tomb. But I am deſirous only of

* Eſchaſſeriaux; in his celebrated report of the 22d Brumaire, upon the ſtate of the finances, aſſigns as a principle cauſe of their diſorder, "des approviſionnemens immenſes de ſubſiſtances, &c. achetés chez l'étranger pour remplir le gouffre dévorant de nos beſoins." He ſays afterwards that "nos rélations extérieures ont été ruineuſes par le bouleverſement du change, & par les efforts de l'étranger pour nous le rendre défavorable, &c." Same report.

remarking,

remarking, that part of her treaſure, which has paſſed her frontier, and carried itſelf into other ſtates, becauſe I ſuſpect, that, by the effect of the revolution in Holland, and other circumſtances, it has principally concentered itſelf in England, and is no ſmall cauſe of that enormous depreciation of the value of money, which is the counterſign of a dearneſs of commodities, and gives the ſurface and appearance of a real ſcarcity and want.

It is not my deſign to encourage any idea that may have been entertained of exaggeration in the deficiency of the late harveſts, from the intereſtedneſs and ſpeculation of individuals. Such an opinion, though perhaps not wholly unfounded, it would be exceedingly dangerous to act upon, and to maintain the conſumption in conſequence, at its uſual proportions, becauſe an error in our calculation would infallibly conduct us to a ſudden and abſolute privation; but I think it material to obſerve the fall in the value of money, which makes a part of the apparent ſcarcity of corn, as well as of the imputed dearneſs of every other article of neceſſity or convenience.

France, however, muſt perceive that the ſcarcity in England, though exaggerated by malevolence, and aſſigned by ignorance excluſively to the war, is in ſome degree the reſult of the

national proſperity, of a redundancy in the quantity of the precious metals, augmented by the high credit of paper, and the opinion both of public and perſonal ſolvency; France muſt diſcern that it ariſes in part from the ſudden influx of her own ſpecie, from the balance of our favourable commerce with the whole world, and from our becoming the exchange, or bank, of ſo great a part of it; and what muſt be more painful and diſcouraging to her, after being diſappointed in her hope of inſurrections, from the momentary inconveniencies to which this decreaſe in the value of money has ſubjected a part of the people, ſhe muſt obſerve, that the proportion between the public debt and the national revenues is diminiſhed and reduced by it. And if ſhe could not behold, without concern and aſtoniſhment, the effect of the ſyſtem eſtabliſhed in 1786, and the proviſion for paying one per cent. intereſt out of the taxes themſelves impoſed during the war, with what ſentiments muſt ſhe ſee the ſilent and progreſſive operation of this important cauſe, which, while labour and wages re-eſtabliſh their natural and indiſpenſible level, will give freſh vigour and activity to induſtry and commerce, which operates as a direct tax upon the metals themſelves, which falls with invariable juſtice, and even accuracy, upon every claſs and pro-

portion

portion of capital, while it diminiſhes the mortgage of the country, and the whole maſs of its debt, which no longer repreſent the ſame portion of its annual produce or induſtry ?

I now come to ſpeak of the principal obſtacles to peace, as they appear to me at this moment, a ſubject which I conſider as exceedingly important to be ſo far explained to the public, as is conſiſtent with political prudence, and that neceſſary liberty in negotiation, which makes it impoſſible for the King's ſervants to unfold themſelves either with much latitude or with much preciſion.

Peace, it is to be obſerved, often chaced from the earth by the paſſions and follies of men, is not to be won back by the firſt vows of returning moderation and wiſdom. If it is ſometimes exiled by crime and ambition, it does not always return with reaſon and humanity. Such, I think, is the ſituation of the world at this conjuncture ; ſo great and general the experience and wearineſs of the ills of war, that *with the exception of a ſmall band of intriguers and politicians*, peace is the univerſal hope, deſire, and prayer of all the nations of Europe. Twenty millions of individuals invite peace daily back to France, with the piercing cries of miſery, oppreſſion, and famine, which peace alone can relieve, and which neither the fraud nor the

terror of the government can ſtifle or ſuppreſs. The territories of ſtrangers offer the ſame vows from another deſcription of her miſerable people, with the ſpectacle of whoſe wrongs and ſufferings every part of the world is filled and polluted: a proſcribed and devoted claſs, whoſe extremes of fortune have rendered them ſo intereſting to the natural ſenſibility and unconquerable prejudices of mankind, and who expect in peace, a period at leaſt to the cruel hope which devours them. Peace, too, is equally deſired by the enemies of France, and by thoſe ſtates which ſhe holds by violence, or deſolates with her perfidious fraternity. The magnanimity of Great Britain invokes peace with public vows, in which the proud miſery of the government of France refuſes to join. The emperor courts peace even under the mediation of a power but too friendly to France: the *poſſible* mediation of Spain is intercepted by the profeſſion of pretenſions ſo lofty and ridiculous, ſo vain and prepoſterous, that it is impoſſible not to perceive that theſe men are not only enemies to peace, but to the very name of it. Preſſed to it at home by the voice, or rather by the ſhrieks and ſcreams of the people, courted to it abroad by nations friendly or neutral, as well as by thoſe which have felt the common calamity of war, and ſo naturally deſire to return to tranquillity,

quillity, they are not afraid of oppoſing their unattainable ambition to the common prayers and common neceſſities of Europe.

It appears certain, however, that the perſons poſſeſſed of authority in France poſſeſs no means of carrying on the war, but thoſe which were employed by the committees of Robeſpierre; it becomes therefore in the higheſt degree important to enquire how far the renovation of the reign of terror might operate in this country as an obſtacle to pacification. There can be no doubt that a government founded upon theſe cruel and abominable principles, affords to every other a juſt and honourable excuſe for inſulating it amidſt the ſtates of Europe, and refuſing to hold any intercourſe or communion with it; and as we already perceive this atrocious ſyſtem rearing itſelf upon the ruins of the conſtitution of 1795, it appears to me to be entitled to a conſiderable degree of attention and reflexion, how far it may be wiſe, or conſiſtent with our former declarations, to treat at this time with the French nation, ſhould it prove unable to maintain that conſtitution, and relapſe into all the crimes and horrors from which it ſeems to have emerged upon the ninth of Thermidor.

In the firſt place, I ſhould imagine this ſyſtem is incapable of becoming permanent; and that, during its energy, it muſt more quickly exhauſt

exhauſt and empty the country, than could be accompliſhed by any weaker principle, or inferior degree of violence and deſolation: conſequently, that France will arrive ſooner at that point of depreſſion and debility, beyond which ſhe cannot puſh, and before which ſhe will not check her deſperate career. In this point of view, therefore, it ſeems by no means certain that the return of *terroriſm* will retard the epoch of peace. But it may be thought that it will at leaſt reſtore the materials of war, and enable the government of France to renew thoſe extraordinary efforts under the firſt ſhock of which the whole continent of Europe has been ſo nearly cruſhed or overwhelmed. I am not, I confeſs, of this opinion; I do not entertain even this apprehenſion in my boſom. The whole internal ſtate of France aſſures me that this fear is viſionary, or at leaſt ſuperfluous and vain. The mighty chaſms that defeat, deſertion, diſaffection, and the ſcaffold, have made in the French nation, cannot be ſo ſoon filled up; their armies cannot be recruited from thoſe depopulated towns which they have filled with military maſſacres, and the very ſtones of which they have levelled with the earth. By the fiſcal ſyſtem of Robeſpierre, every capitaliſt was plundered; and if it were only from the diſperſion of the ſame quantity of ſpecie into a greater number of hands, it will not be ſo eaſy for the guillotine

to repleniſh the exchequer. In his time, and for him, the wiſh of Caligula ſeemed to have been realized, and the whole nation to have but one neck and one executioner; the preſent government will be forced to all the details of tyranny. It muſt claſs its victims and eſtabliſh ſcales and meaſures of oppreſſion, it muſt confiſcate by rule, and diſcriminate in murder—not indeed from remorſe, or tenderneſs, or any other ſentiment of nature, but becauſe it plunders more than one order of men, and preſcribes thoſe who have the revolutionary merit of having proſcribed ſo many others. In truth, I am not able to perceive the rich or the riches of France; let the directory, wring a cancelled and uſeleſs paper from the vile hands enriched by the revolution,—will it pay the neutral powers who have exhauſted the whole ſpecie of the empire, and procure from them freſh fuel and materials of war? I do not think it; but it will tear from every proprietor, in every part of France, his particular poſſeſſion, and accumulate every natural production or article of manufacture in the warehouſes of the government. This point I have already treated; it remains for me only to obſerve, that the ſucceſs muſt be various, as the tyranny is more or leſs intenſe, as the public ſpirit, and the human ſpirit, are more or leſs extinct or torpid in the different departments and dependencies, as the

ruin of agriculture and induſtry is more or leſs accompliſhed, as the deſtruction of the cities is more perfect or incomplete.

For theſe reaſons, I am not inclined to apprehend ſo much from this ſyſtem even during hoſtilities; and at the peace, I think it will repoſe in the common tomb of every forced and unnatural principle, with the reſt of the miſſhapen progeny of the revolution. During the war it will grow weak with the weakneſs of the country upon which it preys, and conſume itſelf with the materials it devours. If it rages with equal violence, it will be confined to fewer and diminiſhing objects; the moral evil muſt languiſh with the natural infirmity, or when the body is emaciated and bed-ridden, there will at leaſt be little to dread from the idle frenzy of the brain, though it fancy the poor machine it agitates a hero or a god, unconquered or unconquerable.

The prevalence, therefore, of the ſame ſyſtem in 1796 would not with me be ſo material an obſtacle to peace as it was in 1794, if it were only becauſe the madneſs of a cripple is not ſo formidable as that of a giant; the danger, beſides, of every principle is proportioned to the force and power that ſupport it, and to the final triumph and ſucceſs that it obtains; in this point of view, it certainly cannot be dangerous to negotiate; and I ſhould incline to think that it is

not contradictory to the ſpirit of any of our declarations, becauſe the danger and contagion of principles diminiſhing with the force that maintains them, it cannot be their abſtract exiſtence againſt which we are at war, or which forms an obſtacle to peace, but the degree of credit and authority they poſſeſs, and the phyſical power they animate and direct; as theſe therefore have decayed and declined, and promiſe quickly to expire, I am not able to perceive any inconſiſtency between our conduct and our profeſſions, even though we ſhould treat with France under the influence of that deteſtable, but now impotent ſyſtem.

It is a reflection painful and degrading to humanity, that a handful of ſtupid and brutal tyrants, juſt eſcaped from the fetters of Robeſpierre, ſhould have been able to rivet them upon twenty millions of beings, and with their own necks ſmoking and ſcarred with that opprobrious yoke, enſlave and bind ſo vaſt a population in chains, almoſt heavier than thoſe they themſelves had worn. That a contemptible band, whoſe little finger is heavier than the loins of Richlieu and Mazarine, with their forced loan, their taxes in kind, their requiſitions, and their maximum, that is to ſay, by public plunder and public terror, ſpeculating upon the cowardice and torpor of the human ſpecies, ſhould be able to prolong

and redouble all the miſeries of France, involve ſo many other ſtates in protracted danger and calamities, and prevent any ſettlement or ſyſtem being reſtored or eſtabliſhed in Europe.—It is a reflection ſtill more degrading, ſtill more inſulting, ſtill more cruel, that theſe men ſhould rely for ſucceſs or impunity, not only on the depravity of their own *ſubjects*, but on ours; not upon the abject and paſſive character, which four years of ſucceſsful cruelty and crimes have impreſſed upon Frenchmen, but upon I know not what activity and alacrity in treaſon and revolt, which they preſume in Great Britain.

The firſt obſtacle to peace, therefore, that I can perceive on the part of France, is the unqualified ambition of the *government*; which, in ſpite of their own neceſſities, or the inhuman alternatives of oppreſſion, which alone remain to them, is determined to maintain the decrees for incorporating the conqueſts; a determination of which it is impoſſible to doubt, as far as depends upon them, ſince their rejection of the mediation of the Court of Denmark, and the internal meaſures of violence and deſperation to which they have reſorted in order to be able to carry on the war for another campaign.

Into

Into the cauſes of this reſolution on their part it is very material to inquire; becauſe we know by repeated or rather continued and invariable experience, that reſolutions and decrees, and even fundamental articles of the conſtitution, are but a dead letter ſo ſoon as they ceaſe to coincide with the wiſhes or intereſts of the perſons who ought to be bound by them. The cauſes do not ariſe ſolely in the ambition, but grow out of the danger and embarraſſments of the government. To diſband their fourteen armies at once, might neither be ſafe for themſelves, nor contribute to the internal tranquillity of a country which has long known no law but force, no morality but ſubmiſſion. Crimes are become mechanical in France, and five hundred thouſand inſtruments no longer obedient to the ſame impulſe, might fall into colliſion with each other, or tear the ill-jointed fabric of government into pieces. Peace too, without ſome order in the finances, without ſome reviviſication of the marine and of commerce, without the reſtoration of agriculture, or the ſettlement of property, (which I think can never take place ſo long as a ſingle aſſignat remains in exiſtence) without manufactures, without induſtry, without religion, without morals:—Peace, I ſay, without all theſe, may not be very deſirable, may appear even dangerous, to men who have not the means of bringing back their coun-

trymen to order and peaceful arts, to honeſt and domeſtic duties, to the intercourſe and habits of civilized life and ſociety.

Peace, however, is neceſſary to France, becauſe the armies that devour her demand peace themſelves, and cannot be maintained without the repetition of thoſe violent meaſures that make peace demanded by the people: without redoubling thoſe oppreſſions which muſt finally produce ſome exploſion too violent for the government to conduct or reſiſt; an exploſion which, moſt probably, is only ſuſpended and delayed from the hope of being anticipated by ſimilar calamities in London. France, has no better title to rely upon the ſpirit of inſurrection than upon the efforts of the ſcarcity, nor can I think the government ſincere in this expectation, however convenient it might be to their own wiſhes and exigencies, as well as thoſe of the nation. Still it muſt be confeſſed, that the diſturbances in London, however inſignificant, the coalition of the clubs with the oppoſition in parliament, and the violent doctrines of ſome of their leaders, to which I have already alluded, with the ſubſequent aſſociations recommended by perſons of conſequence in the Whig club, have been particularly favourable, if not to the encouragement of that hope in the government of France, at leaſt to the propagation of it, and the conſequent deluſion of the people. To this, I imagine, is in

ſome degree to be attributed the apparent indifference with which the king's communication to parliament has been received at Paris; becauſe, ſuppoſing the probability of inſurrections in this country, it was not impoſſible to attribute the conciliating nature of that meſſage to the apprehenſions of the miniſters, and to make it be believed, that even this meaſure was an indication of the approach of the commotions they expected.

I have ſaid, I did not think the government of Paris was the dupe of the expectation they ſpread abroad, nor of the appearances of diſturbances in England, with which they nouriſhed the belief of it, and I will now ſtate my reaſons for entertaining that opinion. It could not have eſcaped the penetration, one would imagine, of the executive directory, the miniſters, and the two counſels of the legiſlature, that the nature and temper of our parties are extremely diſſimilar and diſtinct from their own violent and ſpeculative diviſions; that no alterations in the conſtitution, and in the government, no change, but a change of perſons, could be ſeriouſly intended by the oppoſition; they muſt before this time have diſcovered, that the alliance of great peers and proprietors would moderate the eccentricity, if it added to the conſiſtency of the ſocieties, and abridge or diminiſh the velocity of

their

their movement by the very weight and ſolidity it added to them; they muſt know, beſides, that they could have but little aſſiſtance to expect from the union of two deſcriptions of perſons, whoſe oppoſite principles, and contending intereſts, were an inſuperable bar to the ſincerity or duration of the contract; that it was founded upon mutual fraud and deception; and that the conditions of the alliance were a term, at which the one would never be contented to ſtop, and where the other would never be willing to arrive.

Certainly, through whatever medium this tranſaction may be conſidered in France, where there is an intereſt to colour and diſtort it, it requires no very great degree of perſpicacity or clear ſightedneſs to diſtinguiſh here, that no danger can poſſibly ariſe from it to the government or conſtitution. I mean during its leaſe and continuance; for at the moment of its diſſolution, a real peril will ariſe, but which, I hope, may be as effectually guarded againſt, as it is eaſily foreſeen. If the oppoſition, for inſtance, ſhould prove the dupe in this competition of fraud and duplicity, inſtead of the ſocieties; if it ſhould finally appear, by a critical experiment, that the new leaders, inſtead of creating a force which they are able to regulate and controul, ſhall have organized a power too furious

rious for the government, and for that of the country, (the common error and miſcalculation of ſanguine and diſappointed ambition) then there will ariſe a ſerious and imminent danger indeed; a danger not peculiar to the king's miniſters and ſervants, but broad and general, common to every claſs and deſcription of men, though nearer to theſe very leaders, as they may read in the fate of Orleans and Rochefoucault, a double monument of miſtaken probity and perſiſting depravity; a common mirror to intereſted vice and ſpeculutive virtue.

Suppoſing, however, that I am miſtaken in my conjecture of the effect this coalition, (coupled with the doctrines of a paſſive reſiſtance and a prudential revolt, which followed cloſe upon it) may operate upon the opinion of the government in France, and that they ſhould be inclined to conſider the occaſion as fortunate for reſuming their long-ſuſpended, but favourite plan of *invaſion*: for I wiſh to diſſemble no ſpecies of danger or inconvenience which can poſſibly reſult from the continuance of the war, and I think every thing poſſible, both to deſpair and to enthuſiaſm: I am ſo far from apprehending that they would derive any aſſiſtance from this coalition in that caſe, that I am perſuaded it would be the preciſe cauſe of its immediate diſſolution. Beſides that they would meet great, and I think,

inſurmountable

insurmountable difficulties upon the sea, and even before they could embark upon it; they would not find the moment particularly opportune or propitious, when the kingdom is full of disciplined and experienced troops, and of militia and provincial forces, that may be compared with them in almost every respect, without injury or disparagement. They cannot be ignorant that the dangers of England have always united all her parties; they cannot think opposition more formidable to government at this crisis, than when half the present servants of his majest were to be numbered with it; nor forget, that those very dangers were the cause of giving so much weight and consistency to administration, by withdrawing the most powerful and respectable individuals from the ranks of the minority.

For my own part, I confess that it has fallen to my lot to know the opinion pretty generally entertained in foreign countries of the corruption and depravity of our parties, and to know that it is exaggerated and mistaken. There is something in our national character and disposition, which commonly corrects and qualifies the vilest passions and tendencies, and extracts or tempers the worst poisons that circulate in our blood. Faction and civil war itself, have been found temperate evils in this climate

to

o what they have proved under other ſkies; and the experience we have had of them, has enabled us to prepare and provide from afar, againſt their return or contagion. If we except the rebellions, on account of the diſputed ſucceſſion, which aroſe from a falſe ſenſe of honour and a miſtaken duty, the whole empire, ſince the period of the revolution, has been united upon every occaſion of danger or neceſſity, and no part or party can claim any merit in this reſpect, or pre-eminence over the reſt; we are loud and noiſy in the out-poſts, but when the body of the place is attacked or expoſed, we forget our diviſions, and form the common garriſon of our country.

Neither can it have eſcaped, I imagine, the penetration of the French miniſtry, that the harangues and motions of the oppoſition for peace, are not more likely to be ſincere, than they are to prevail; for they, no doubt, whatever we may do at home, conſider an oppoſition as a *poſſible adminiſtration*, and enquire not only into what they ſay, but what they would do, and what they muſt do, if they were truſted with the government. They may poſſibly believe, that if Mr. Fox had been in power at the beginning of the year 1793, he would have ſent an ambaſſador to demand reparation for the violation of the treaties; they may poſſibly believe,

that he might have diſſembled his horror at the murder of the royal family, and accepted ſatisfaction for the conſpiracy into which the convention had entered with our own traitors, to ſubvert the throne and the conſtitution; they may believe it poſſible, that if Mr. Fox had been miniſter, the war might have broken out ſix months later; or to ſet no limits to credulity, they might believe, that if Mr. Fox had been miniſter, we ſhould ſtill have been at peace.—But if they had faith for all this; if they could ſubmit their reaſon to all theſe dogmas of oppoſition, it would not follow that they ſhould believe alſo, that if Mr. Fox were the miniſter in 1796, after the contrary of all theſe ſuppoſitions had taken place, he would ſubmit to the decree of the convention, and diſmantle the fleets of England, while France incorporated Savoy, the Netherlands, and all the left bank of the Rhine. They need not believe, becauſe Mr. Fox had once wiſhed for peace, that he would therefore throw away all the advantages of the war; that he would forget our conqueſts in the Eaſt, or the victory of the firſt of June, 1794, the deſtruction of half the French navy in the harbours of Toulon: they would not believe that Mr. Fox, any more than Mr. Pitt, or any one Engliſhman more than another, would ſubmit to the preliminaries they exact, or come to a negotiation till France had repealed her decree; nay, I will

go further, becauſe it is neceſſary to expoſe fully the expectations and reliances of that government; and I will ſay, that if that decree had been any thing elſe, in their own eſtimation, than an obſtacle and barrier to every ſpecies of negotiation, which, of all things is uppermoſt in their apprehenſion, they would never have ſuffered it to paſs, or would have repealed it with a precipitation greater than that with which they paſſed it: for, if the ſtate of the nations at war had been reverſed, and, inſtead of France, England had been ruined and exhauſted; if there were no power in Europe upon foot to repreſs the uſurpations of France, and it were clear that ſhe muſt, *de facto*, extend herſelf to the Rhine, what would be the end or advantage of maintaining this proud and vain-glorious decree?—Would it not rather remove the term, and endanger the event of that ambitious peace, which ſhe would otherwiſe have the certainty of concluding, by humiliating and exaſperating her enemies, by driving them to incalculable efforts of thoughtleſs and unmeaſurable deſpair? Can they think, then, that England, entire and untouched, will crouch to thoſe conditions at the feet of her emaciated enemy, which, in the vigour and fullneſs of his health, ſhe would not have accepted even upon her death-bed? that ſhe is

ſo

ſo inſenſible to the attractions of victory, if ſhe were unmindful of every thing elſe, as to ſubmit to an inſolent law of the enemy, which, in defeat and ruin, ſhe would have reſiſted? or that ſhe will abandon her honour amidſt the ſhouts of triumph, which ſhe would have defended amidſt the cries of deſperation?—No, believe me, the government of France cannot ſwallow this myſterious creed; they are not the dupes of this unreaſonable and implicit faith, calculated only for the political methodiſts of the day, for the illuminated commonwealth of Mary-le-bone fields.—Carnot and Lepeau are not amongſt theſe true believers; they neither expect the ceſſion of Gibraltar, nor the circumſcription of our marine, nor the repeal of the navigation act, nor the ſurrender of the Netherlands, nor the dereliction of our allies, from *this* adminiſtration, nor from *that*; all they require or expect of their friends in England, is to diſturb and embarraſs the government, and protract the war; a ſervice very faithfully rendered, and, I have no doubt, very honourably paid for; and to give appearances of diſſenſion and approaching revolt, ſufficient to enable them to dupe and deceive their own people into a perſeverance, under this hope, which, without it, would be impracticable or deſperate.

The government of France too muſt have taken

taken into conſideration, in any eſtimate they were forming upon the probability of aſſiſtance from the ſocieties, in caſe of invaſion, that material point which I have already diſcuſſed, the abſolute diſgrace and extinction of the revolutionary principles which might have rendered ſuch an expectation leſs unreaſonable at the beginning of the year 1793; they muſt know that as thoſe principles have been unfolded and diſcredited, the danger of commotions, and the danger in commotions, have ſubſided along with them, and they muſt be diſſuaded by their own friends in thoſe bodies from ſo hopeleſs and fatal an experiment.

Though the deſires, the ambition, and even the embarraſſments of the new government, ſeem to preſcribe perſeverance on the part of France, it does not therefore appear that they can long find the means of perſeverance at home, or that they can ſeriouſly rely upon any aſſiſtance, or upon any event very favourable to their intereſts in this country. This obſtacle to peace therefore being nothing more than the perſonal obſtinacy of the individuals in power, muſt yield to the current of events, and the neceſſities of the empire.

So well convinced does that government appear of the compulſion that awaits it, and of the neceſſity not only of renouncing the conqueſts,

but

but of paying an indemnity to the powers at war, if it were to come to a negotiation, that it artfully throws all the conditions of peace into preliminaries, and exacts a previous aſſent, which would take away all occaſion of diſcuſſion. This policy, however, at beſt weak and ſhort-ſighted, was deſperate even at the time when their armies were triumphant in Germany; experience has doubtleſs undeceived the cabinet of France, if it ever really imagined that Europe would be frightened out of its liberties, and the Rhine be taken as it had taken Condé and Valenciennes, *by a decree of the Convention:* it muſt know, that this decree, as long as it exiſts, can have no effect, operation, or influence upon the conditions of peace, and maintain it only to render peace impoſſible, which, either from perſonal danger, or political fears, it conſiders it as a misfortune to itſelf, or to France.

The decrees, therefore, are not ſo much an obſtacle to peace, as to negotiation, becauſe, being wholly unfounded and unauthoriſed by the power, ſituation, and reſources of France, they muſt neceſſarily fall at once, and without diſcuſſion, whenever that government wiſhes to have peace. Another obſtacle to peace is, the indemnity of Great Britain, which will be leſs palatable to France, than the ſurrender of her precarious authority in the low countries. It is fortunate for

her,

her, that ſhe has a pledge in the magnanimity of this country, and in the perſonal character of the government, that it will not delay the repoſe and tranquillity of Europe, by exacting a rigorous juſtice, and retaliating upon her avarice and ambition. It is fortunate for France, that the moderation of her enemies will not pervert the ſucceſſes of this war, to the attainment of any other objects than thoſe for which it was undertaken, or direct the ſuperiority of their arms, to any other end, than the vindication of the treaties, and the reſtoration of the balance of power.

Were it otherwiſe—but I repreſs myſelf; let her tremble to think, after the calamities of her military marine, after the extinction of her commerce, after the ruin of her finance, after the depopulation of her empire; let her tremble to think, what her caſe would be, if with four hundred ſhips of war, with a commerce encreaſed, with an exuberance of reſources, with a population untouched, and a conſtitution invigorated and endeared, Great Britain, in her turn, ſhould remove the barriers, or violate the ſyſtem of Europe; if, at the conferences for a peace, it were to be diſcuſſed, whether, after having been, during more than a century in danger of being enſlaved by the natural preponderance of France, and, during the laſt years of being corrupted and annihilated

nihilated in all its political relations, by the arts and malevolence of that reſtleſs country, by the overflow of its inhabitants, the univerſality of its language, and by a French faction in every ſtate; I ſay, whether it were not juſt, expedient, and neceſſary to the future welfare and tranquillity of this part of the globe, to provide for its ſecurity, by circumſcribing her territory, and reſtoring the ancient boundaries of her empire? Let her tremble to think, if ſhe were to render back all the uſurpations of the laſt century, which juſtice might preſcribe, and her weakneſs ſuffer, what limits would be thoſe of France? how different from the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Rhine, and the Meuſe?—I repreſs myſelf.—But France herſelf, if ever that country can be grateful, will one day own the obligation as all Europe beſides does now. It is indeed glorious, after having ſtood in the breach for civilized ſociety; having repreſſed the torrent of enlightened barbariſm, which threatened to overwhelm our arts, inſtitutions, manners, and religion, and preſerved the ſocial order upon its ancient baſis—to reſtore the dyke, and rebuild the column: and with every thing in our power, to demand no more than the poſt of honour, and the means of rendering the ſame ſervice, upon the recurrence of the ſame neceſſity.

This, I am perſuaded, will be evident in the terms of peace, which I have no ſcruple to ſay

muſt and will be dictated by Great Britain. She will not abandon her allies for individual advantage, nor accept an equivalent for the uſurpations of her enemies; and the decline of the colonies with the ſeeds of a negro empire in the Weſt-Indies, will, in ſpite of the conqueſts ſhe may retain, render her a loſer in that part of the world. She will ſeek her true and certain indemnity, not in the arbitrary conditions, but in the firmneſs and ſecurity of an honourable peace; and this *Power of the third order*, will not forget, at a moment when every thing ſeems attainable to her ambition, that ſhe is the miſtreſs-nation, not by the extent of her territory and reſources, by a predominance of population, or a *natural ſuperiority over all Europe together*, but by her public and private virtues; her juſtice and moderation; her arts and induſtry; her laws and regulated liberty; her temperate courage; her unaſſuming wiſdom, and that moral greatneſs which ſhe oppoſes to every danger, and to the ſeductions of victory itſelf.

THE END.